

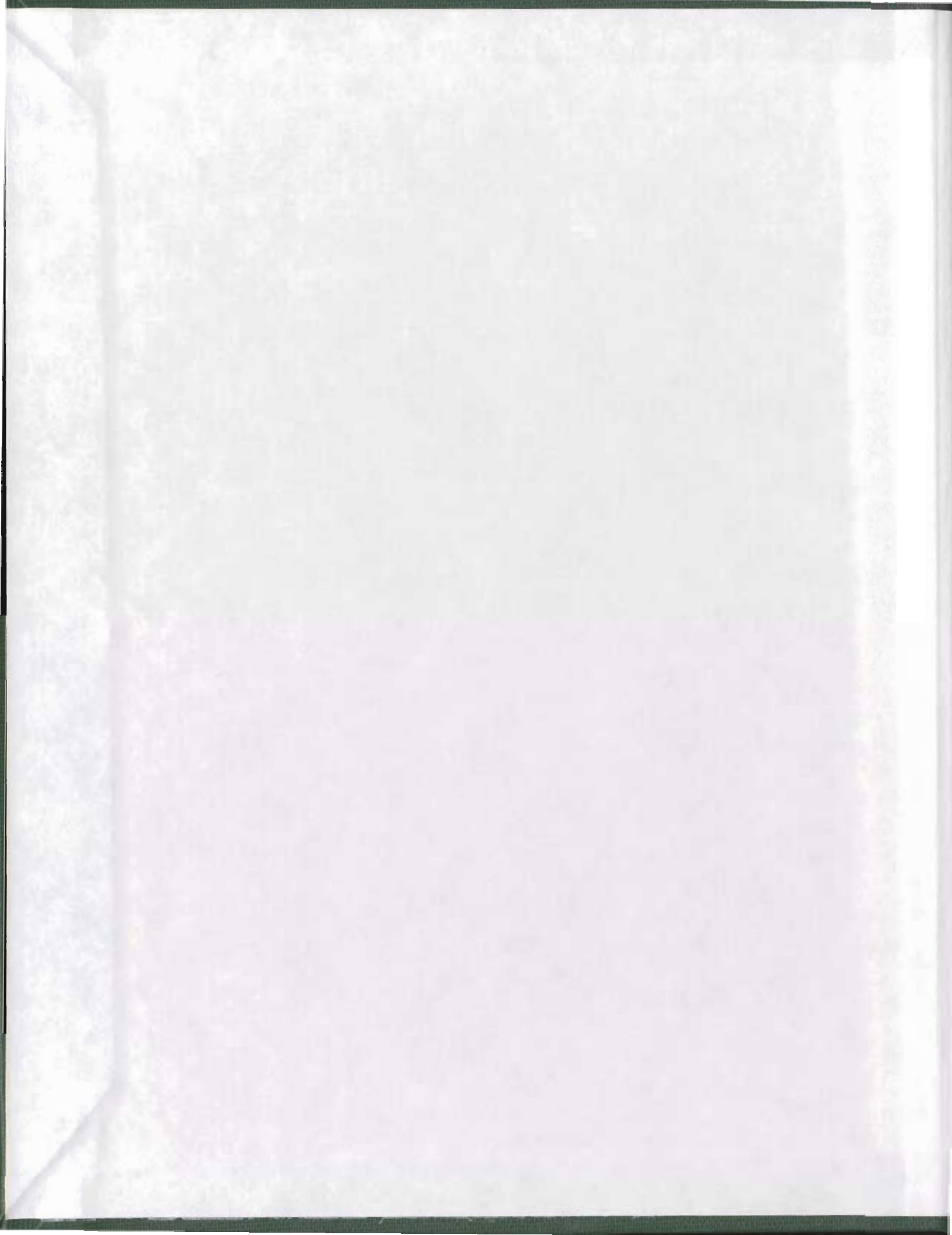
AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT PROMOTION  
POLICIES IN NEWFOUNDLAND CENTRAL/  
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND ASSOCIATED  
FEEDER SCHOOLS

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AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT PROMOTION POLICIES IN  
NEWFOUNDLAND CENTRAL/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS  
AND ASSOCIATED FEEDER SCHOOLS

by



Cyril Paul Coombs

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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Department of Educational Administration  
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#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to describe various aspects of student promotion policies in Newfoundland central/junior high and associated feeder schools as perceived by administrators of these organizations. More specifically, promotion policy differences among and between school boards, central/junior high and feeder schools are examined. Furthermore, the study attempts to examine the relationship between central/junior high and associated feeder school response.

All Newfoundland school board superintendents, central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools were mailed a questionnaire concerning student promotion policies. This questionnaire was adapted from a similar Toronto study (1964) and was piloted in a St. John's school board before mailing. The questionnaire was mailed in April 1979. Final overall response rate was 80 per cent.

Differences among boards, central/junior high and associated feeder schools were determined from distributions and mean responses to each questionnaire statement. It was found that all three groups showed much agreement in responding. However, boards differed on statements concerning: conditional promotion, grade retention, importance of chronological age, and student's social group. Boards disagreed on the importance of the following considerations for non-promotion: student work and study habits, effort, attendance record, social maturity, ability to handle work of the next grade, and being a slow learner.

Despite overall agreement among central/junior high schools, they differed on statements concerning: conditional promotion, importance of social group, grade retention, student attitude, work and study habits, effort, attendance, marks in relation to the class, and student's need for a firmer foundation before moving on to the next grade. Feeder school response differences occurred on statements dealing with: conditional promotion, study habits, effort, attendance record, being a slow learner, progress in relation to the class, class inattentiveness, and social maturity.

To examine differences between these groups, Chi-square analyses were performed. This showed that board, central/junior high and feeder school response significantly differed on the following statements: minimum standards of achievement, the multi-factor approach to promotion, skipping, grade retention, and chronological age. Overall, Chi-square analyses indicated that most significant differences occurred between central/junior high and feeder schools.

Pearson product-moment correlations were used to point out the relationship between central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools. The mean correlation between each school was  $+ .448$ , indicating a moderate degree of similarity between central/junior high and associated feeder school response.

Recommendations and suggestions for further research arose from this study. The major recommendation indicates that school boards and schools should further examine student promotion policy discrepancies prevalent within their districts. Upon completion of this activity it should be determined if these discrepancies ought to exist. If they ought not to, means for better coordinating student promotion policies should be devised.



#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge the advice, guidance and constant availability of Dr. Dennis Treslan, thesis committee chairman, during the course of this study. Special thanks to other committee members, Dr. William Spain for his advice and suggestions regarding the statistical analysis, and to Dr. Sherman Stryde who also gave criticism and helpful advice during the writing of the thesis.

Gratitude is also expressed to school boards and principals who took time from their busy schedule to complete the questionnaire. This study would not be possible without their cooperation.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Student promotion is a major concern to many educators. Jackson (1975) maintains that a dichotomy of opinions surrounding grade promotion exist, some stating automatic promotion and others declaring rigid grade promotion. As a result of the elimination of Grade IX and Grade X public examinations, and the simultaneous institution of Grade XI shared evaluation in 1971, many Newfoundland educators believed that more students would be promoted (Bull and others, 1977). In their study of shared evaluation, Bull and others concluded that emphasis has continued to be placed on examinations as a promotion device. As a result, educational goals, such as ensuring that all pupils master the fundamental skills of learning to the limit of their abilities, may have become secondary to passing examinations.

When shared evaluation was first introduced, some educators opposed it claiming schools had too much input when deciding final results. Regardless of the arguments about elimination of public examinations, one of the major results is that it has made possible greater flexibility of school promotion policies. This study investigated differences in Newfoundland school promotion policies as they exist at board and school levels. Particular attention has been focused on promotion differences between central and junior high schools and associated feeder schools.

### Statement of the Problem

The major problem of this study was to describe various aspects of student promotion policies in Newfoundland central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools as perceived by administrators of these organizations. More specifically this study attempted to answer the following questions:

- (1) What differences exist among perceptions of school board student promotion policies?
- (2) What differences exist among perceptions of selected central/junior high school student promotion policies?
- (3) What differences exist among perceptions of selected elementary school student promotion policies?
- (4) What differences exist between perceptions of school board, central/junior high, and feeder school promotion policies?
- (5) Is there a relationship between perceptions of central/junior high school and associated feeder school student promotion policies?

### Theoretical Framework

#### Evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of our education system. It is used to decide if learning has occurred, and how the learning process might be improved (Frank, 1979). Educators make evaluations for immediate and long-term decisions, and whether the educator is aware of it or not, good evaluation is a complex process (Parsons, 1967). Educators do not necessarily agree on the exact nature of the evaluation process, but all agree on its importance and intricacy (Green & Stone, 1977).

Numerous models have been used to explain the evaluation process. One such model (Figure 1) developed by Taylor and Maguire (1966)

provides valuable insight into the evaluation process. Taylor and Maguire state, "the uses of the model lie in suggesting variables and relationships to be investigated in the course of evaluation" (p. 13). Another point to remember in viewing this model is that it does not have to be viewed in totality; "... one of its merits lies in the fact that the model can be entered and left at those points which the practitioner deems most useful" (p. 13).

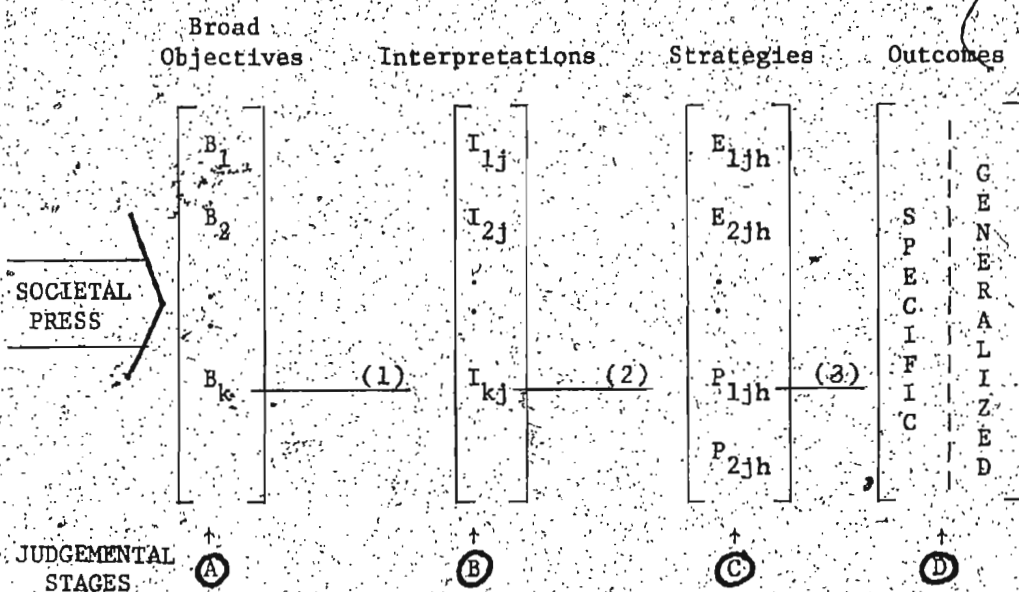


Figure 1. A Theoretical Evaluation Model (p. 12).

This theoretical evaluation model was developed specifically for curriculum evaluation. The curriculum aspect of this model is especially important to this study because promotion ultimately rests on whether or not curriculum goals have been achieved.

"Societal Press" refers to the demands from society, which result in broad objectives. These demands may come from particular sectors. An example of a societal sector would be an organization such as



The Human Rights Organization.

Broad objectives are numerous but are usually imprecise because they do not specify behaviour. Due to their imprecision they are restated by some agent (1). This agent may in fact be a curriculum developer. He must also judge the worth of each broad objective (Judgemental Stage A).

The restating of broad objectives results in interpretations behaviourally corresponding to these objectives. The judgemental task (B) at this stage is to determine the appropriateness of the behavioural objectives. Once the behavioural objectives are determined, another agent (2) has to develop text books, lesson aids, etc. to translate these objectives into classroom strategies. These strategies are then used by the teacher.

The application of strategies results in elicitations and presentations. Elicitations refer to desired behaviours, while presentations are learning materials applied to agent (3), the student. At the "Strategies" stage, the judgemental task (C) is to determine the efficiency and adequacy of presentations and elicitations, their potential effect on student outcome, and the correspondence of strategies with interpretations. This judgement does not come from student results, but from teacher, parent and administrative reaction to the curriculum.

After the student (3) is exposed to these "Strategies" through the teacher, "Outcomes" are produced. "Outcomes" refer to behaviour that is specifically oriented towards the school or behaviour that is generalized beyond the school. In this judgemental stage (D) the evaluator has to decide if observed outcomes compare with behaviours listed in "Interpretations." Is the student's performance at an

acceptable level? The answer to this question determines if a student is promoted, since the degree of similarity between actual and intended student outcomes forms the basis of most, if not all, promotion policies (Frank, 1979). A high degree of similarity between intended and actual outcomes indicates promotion; conversely, a low degree of similarity may result in non-promotion (Figure 2).

#### Policy Development

Policies have been formulated in many areas of education, with student promotion being no exception. With regard to Figure 2, policy is needed to continually monitor the degree of similarity between intended and actual student outcomes. It is also needed to determine what action is to be taken on the basis of this similarity.

In this study, the concept of educational policy as defined by Davies and Brickell (1969) is adhered to. Using a model, Davies and Brickell explain the process of policy formation, as well as the various factions involved (Figure 3). These factions are laymen (school board members) and professionals (teachers). A broad boundary exists between laymen and professional involvement, indicating the usual areas of involvement.

Davies and Brickell define "policy" as a guide to discretionary action. It is the organization's general philosophy regarding a particular matter. This general philosophy is derived from goals, which can be developed by laymen and/or professionals. Once a "policy" is formulated, "administrative regulations" governing the implementation of this policy have to be developed. These "regulations" are specifications of required actions. These are usually developed by professionals. "Action" refers to the activities that occur as a result of

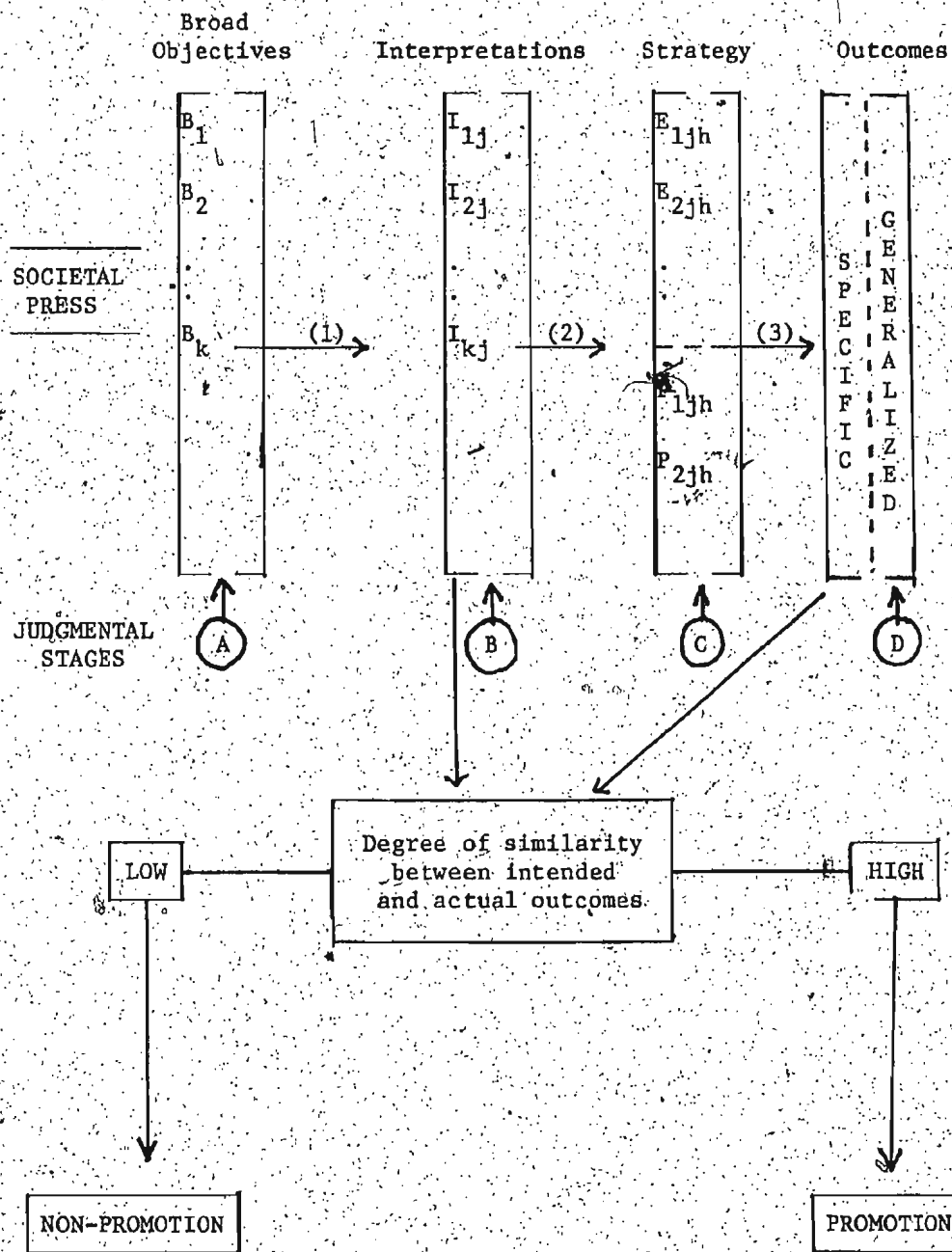


Figure 2. A Theoretical Promotion Model

administrative regulations.

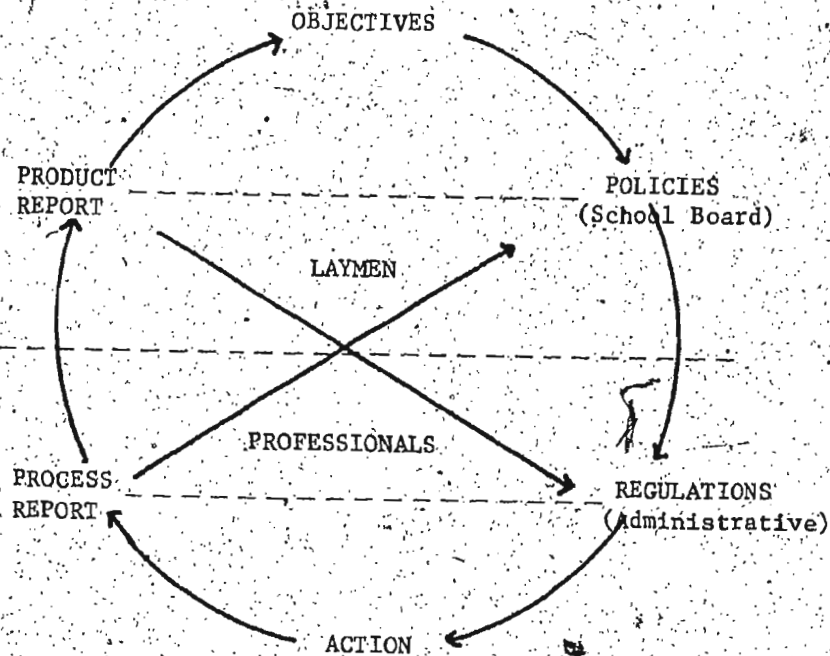


Figure 3. Policy Formulation Model (p. 10).

The report of what is actually happening is termed "process report." This report may tell, for example, the number of students exposed to a particular policy and the cost. The "process report" has little bearing on whether the policy is useful or not. The "product report" provides information on the value of the policy, e.g., the number of students who increase their average, and the number of students who remain in school. "Process" and "product" reports can influence policies and administrative regulations. If the "process report" indicates that a policy is too costly, the policy and/or administrative regulations can be changed. This can also be changed if the "product report" indicates that the "policy" is not improving a situation. Once

this process is completed, it can result in new objectives. These new objectives can indicate the need for a new policy, thus starting the process again. Davies and Brickell maintain that policy development is a continuous process.

This policy formulation model indicates the desire for precise, written policies. There has been a growing concern to have policies available in written form. An American School Board Journal editorial (1969) states policies should be put in writing because:

1. Written policies show everyone that the board is running a businesslike operation.
2. They inform everyone about the board's intent, goals and aspirations.
3. They give credence to board actions.
4. They establish a legal record.
5. They are impersonal. They make whimsical administration difficult.
6. They foster stability and continuity.
7. They give the public a means to evaluate board performance.
8. They contribute to the board efficiency.
9. They clarify board-superintendent functions. (p. 34)

Within the Newfoundland education system, school boards and individual schools play an important role in development of student promotion policies. The Schools Act states:

(84) Subject to this Act and the regulations, every School Board shall

(a) subject to the approval of the minister make regulations, rules and by-laws

(i) providing for the holding of internal examinations, or for other methods of assessing the work of students, in all its schools. (Schools Act, 1970)



Considering that there are 35 school boards in Newfoundland and that each is responsible for its own promotion policy, it is possible that a wide variety of promotion policies exist. If this is the case one can expect to find differences in promotion policies among elementary, central and junior high schools since schools are responsible for implementing board policy. Despite the fact that school boards are responsible for assessing student performance, curriculum content is primarily the responsibility of the Department of Education (Schools Act, 1970, Section 59). This means that students may be exposed to a standard curriculum but to different promotion policies. This has the potential of creating a serious weakness in Newfoundland's education system. Students of equal performance may be promoted in one situation but not promoted in another situation. Bull and others (1977) found that this inequality has implications beyond the high school, to post-secondary institutes. They state:

Schools which give low grades (marks) are obviously decreasing the opportunities of their students for access to further education while those that give high grades artificially enhance their students' opportunities. (p. 65)

Through a questionnaire, this study attempts to determine the degree of variation in promotion policies among school boards, elementary schools, central high schools and junior high schools.

Not only does the potential for a variety of school board promotion policies exist, but the possibility also exists for the wide interpretation of each board policy. According to Davies and Brickell, potential for wide interpretation of policy exists unless policy is accompanied by administrative regulations. Therefore, if a board has a policy without governing regulations, possibility for a variety of promotion policies within that district exists. Differing promotion

policies within a district can create problems for students and administrators alike. The greatest problem for administrators is variability among student achievement levels because of exposure to a variety of promotion policies. Students have the problem of adapting to different promotion policies of central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools. This study attempts to determine if students enrolling in different schools are in fact exposed to different promotion policies.

#### Delimitations

This study is delimited to all Newfoundland central and junior high schools and associated feeder schools. Of special importance were students advancing from Grade VI to VII and changing schools in the process. All 114 central and junior high schools were examined using the same questionnaire. School board officials were also requested to complete this questionnaire.

It is the aim of this study to describe student promotion policies extant at both the board and school level. The school level is studied focusing on the central and junior high schools and associated feeder schools. Where a board does not have central or junior high schools, no schools within these boards were studied. Excluded boards were: Labrador Roman Catholic School Board and the Seventh Day Adventist School Board.

#### Limitations

Any conclusions or interpretations arising from the results of this study must be considered with regard to the following limitations:

- (1) Since the study is restricted to Newfoundland central and junior high schools and associated feeder school

students, results of this study may not be generalizable to non-Newfoundland situations.

- (2) Respondents were asked to specifically consider promotion policies governing regular stream students from Grades V to VIII. Hence, results may not be generalizable to other streams or grades.
- (3) Respondent perception used in describing student promotion policies.

### Significance of the Study

This study has significance for the following reasons:

- (1) No extensive research has been done on student promotion policies in Newfoundland.
- (2) As a result of increasing education demands, educators have been forced to deal with issues such as student promotion. This study should assist administrators in understanding promotion policy problems.
- (3) This study should serve as a basis for further student promotion research.

### Definition of Terms

<u>Central High School:</u>	A school established within an area for the express purpose of accommodating all pupils from Grades VII to XI, inclusive.
<u>Competency Based Promotion:</u>	A system of promotion based entirely on a student's academic performance.
<u>Continuous Progress Promotion:</u>	A system of promotion based on a multitude of factors such as chronological age, social maturity, academic achievement, emotional status and physical maturity.
<u>Continuous Promotion:</u>	A system of promotion where a student is continuously promoted regardless of his level of performance.
<u>Elementary School:</u>	A school established within an area for the express purpose of accommodating all pupils in designated grades not higher than Grade VI.

Feeder School:

A school established within an area for the express purpose of accommodating all pupils until they have reached a specific grade level. After students of this school have reached that grade level they are absorbed by another school.

Junior High School:

A school established within an area for the express purpose of accommodating all pupils in Grades VII and VIII or Grades VII, VIII and IX (The Schools Act, 1970).

Student Promotion Policy:

The criteria used to determine if a student advances to the next higher level or grade.

## CHAPTER-II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

This chapter, which presents a review of literature pertinent to an understanding of student promotion, has been divided into three sections. The first section reviews literature dealing with educational measurement relating to assessment of student performance. Section Two examines the status of promotion policy-making within the Newfoundland context. Literature pertaining to student promotion in general is examined in the third section.

#### Educational Measurement

In the field of education, testing, measurement and evaluation are three terms widely used by teachers. According to Ebel (1972) these terms are a source of much confusion because of their often interchangeable usage. However, writers indicate that distinct differences do exist. Treslan (1979) describes testing as "the usage of some specific instrument or set of instruments to determine a certain quantity or trait" (unpaged).

Measurement is generally conceived of somewhat more broadly than testing to include such matters as purposes, interpretations and use of results (Lehmann, 1975). Thus, measurement includes other types of instruments beside tests, such as rating scales, checklists, score cards or any other tools that yield quantitative results.

We can measure characteristics in ways other than by giving tests. Using observations, rating scales or any other device

that allows us to obtain information in quantative form is measurement. Also measurement can refer to both the score obtained and the process used. (p. 5)

Evaluation is conceived of as the broadest of these three terms. Stufflebeam (1971) states that evaluation is "the process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives" (p. xxv). In measurement, one generally strives to be as objective as possible and minimize the role of judgement. However, Stufflebeam indicates that evaluation necessitates judgement in considering a variety of information. Educational evaluation involves all available types of data, qualitative as well quantitative. Consistent with this view, Mehren (1975) contends that the intent of evaluation then is to determine "the congruence between performance and objectives" (p. 5).

Despite differences between testing, measurement, and evaluation, the terms represent separate, yet overlapping processes. Treslan uses the following figure to illustrate this relationship.

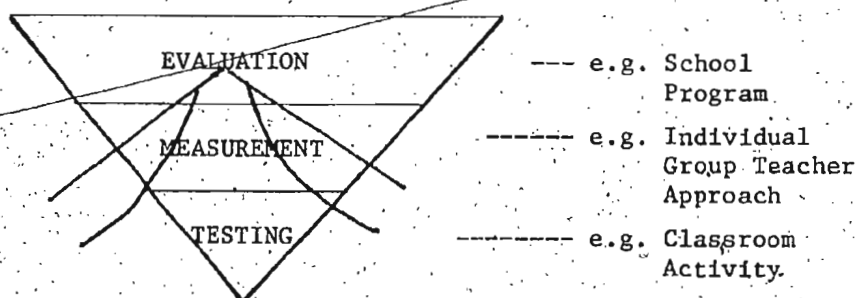


Figure 4: Testing, Measurement, and Evaluation Interaction (p. 3).

This figure, along with the Theoretical Promotion Model described in Chapter I, aids in explaining the important role that testing, measurement and evaluation play in determining overall student promotion. A promotion decision is evaluative, based on measurement results derived



from various types of tests. This suggests that measurement and evaluation have major student promotion implications. Promotion not only rests on good evaluation, but on accurate measurement and testing. Ebel (1975) states that the very base of the evaluation process, testing, is often neglected in many schools.

... tests themselves are imperfect. Indeed some are seriously flawed. They are some times unwisely misinterpreted, overinterpreted or handled as weapons rather than as tools. They reflect particular perceptions of the goals of education which not all educators share. (p. 83)

Owens (1976) is more extreme in his view:

Examinations are bureaucratic means of social control, suited to mass societies dedicated to propaganda, operant conditioning, brain-washing orders transmitted from the top down, and all the other trappings of an authoritarian society that uses schools as a means of socialization. (p. 13)

Intelligence tests too, are not exempt from measurement criticism. Orinstein (1976) suggests that these devices are often biased because of the items used on such tests. He claims that these tests are especially unfair to children with poor socio-economic backgrounds.

Despite the massive amount of literature deploring test usage, Bridgeman (1977) observes that they do serve a valuable purpose. They help report student progress and provide a mode for directing and rewarding the efforts of students. Because of this important function, Bridgeman feels that test usage will continue.

If it were true in general that marks have little meaning, students, parents, admissions officers and prospective employers would soon cease using them and teachers would cease bothering to determine them. (p. 101)

Notwithstanding this fact, many current promotional decisions appear to be made on the basis of measurement results although writers have expressed disagreement about the accuracy of these findings.

### Policy Development

Determination of educational policy is of growing concern for many educators. Stringham (1976) writes:

Among some Canadian writers . . . a conclusion seems to be surfacing that there is a need and an acceptance both of centralization (of policy) for some purposes and of decentralization for others, depending, of course upon situational factors. (p. 7)

"Situational factors" appear to be the key element to determining policy control. This seems to be the case regarding educational policy making in Newfoundland. The Department of Education has delegated power to local authorities in some matters, while retaining supreme authority in others. This government body maintains control over curriculum policy, while school boards are given responsibility for assessment of student performance in relation to curriculum goals. This may have the potential of creating a serious weakness in Newfoundland's education system. Students of equal performance may be promoted in one situation but not promoted in another, thus suggesting a need for Department of Education policy. Despite an apparent need for such policy, many schools seem fearful of centralization of control (Fagan, 1980).

Blanket policies on promotion are likely to be harmful to students. All relevant information must be taken into account when deciding the best course of action for the progress of an individual student. All aspects of the child's needs and development must be taken into consideration. Academic achievement is only one facet of this development. (p. 12)

Stringham notes that government can have centralized control of policy development and at the same time provide a degree of local autonomy. In providing a framework for this type of policy, the findings of Dror (1970) appear particularly apropos. Dror states that there are four main dimensions to this type of policy development:

- (1) policy analysis -- an approach and methodology for design and identification of possible alternatives in respect to complex issues.
- (2) megapolicy -- a master policy, one which provides guides for a set of discreet policies.
- (3) metapolicy -- policy on policy making dealing with systematic characteristics for weighing values, priorities and goals.
- (4) realization strategy -- the means of improving policy making through the application of policy sciences to the reality of recommendations. (p. 7)

If student promotion policy is envisioned within Dror's framework, the rôle of the Newfoundland Department of Education would appear to be of a coordinating capacity. This rôle would be performed by establishing a megapolicy. It would then be the responsibility of individual school boards to create metapolicy consistent with this Department's megapolicy. This concept is similar to the idea of Davies and Brickell (1969). From their perspective, metapolicy parallels administrative regulations.

Due to an apparent absence of megapolicy, Dror's framework may have little relevance to development of Newfoundland student promotion policies. This absence of megapolicy seems to have created the potential for a varying array of school board metapolicies, possessing minimum guiding direction. Under the present circumstances another consequence of decentralized control is the inability to achieve a specific "realization strategy." In practice, the Department of Education does not formally assess promotion policies or provide viable alternatives. Moreover, there is no existing mechanism where a school board might assess its policy in relation to other board policies (Fagan, 1980). Thus, it is extremely difficult for boards across this province to have consistent metapolicies.

Ultimately, the student is most disadvantaged due to an absence of this megapolicy. The probability of being promoted might simply be a function of the school attended. Interestingly enough, the Newfoundland Department of Education is aware that this situation exists (Badcock, Fagan & Penny, 1980).

We have not changed student promotion [policy] because by law it is board responsibility. Some boards are not willing to allow the Department of Education to control this aspect of education. (unpaged)

However, this same Department of Education has positions of Assistant Director of Testing, Evaluation Consultant, and Supervisor of Public Exams. These three offices are directly involved with Grade XI public examinations. Regarding their areas of future involvement, Penny states:

In the past few years much of our activity has been geared towards improving the shared evaluation system. Looking at the next few years, assessment of student performance in the reorganized high school program will take up most of our resources. (unpaged)

#### Student Promotion

The definition used by Allison (1977) aptly defines promotion in general:

In universally accepted usage the term promotion is synonymous with the advancement of individuals through the hierarchy within a given organization. (p. 33)

This definition is equally applicable to student promotion. Organization is analogous to school, while hierarchy may be thought of as grades or levels. As Reiter (1973) suggests, the student has to perform to qualify for promotion. If he does not qualify, two alternatives remain--try again or give up. In other words, students may repeat the year's work or drop out.

Traditionally, teachers have had the unquestioned right to decide the promotion status of students. Marshall (1973) contends that this is no longer the case. He believes that teachers are frequently denied the right to fail a student because "the teacher exerts undue authority and influence on a student seeking a general education." He adds, "since a student takes only a few courses (from one teacher) in a term, failure in one looms disproportionately large" (p. 45). As a result of public demand and teacher indecision, Hahn (1973) observes that resolution of this promotion dilemma is becoming increasingly difficult.

Supportive literature clearly indicates that those who denounce non-promotion outnumber those who support it. Gaite (1969) examined the validity of the argument that non-promotion and subsequent repetition of work in a grade could lead to an improved performance. He concluded that non-promotion could not be justified on these grounds. His study showed that there was no substantial improvement in performance for students who repeated grades.

Funk (1969) affirmed that non-promotion does not lead to an improvement of performance. He argued that the major goals of non-promotion--better mastering of subject matter and more achievement--have not been realized.

Learning is enhanced when children move on with their classmates into new endeavors, instead of experiencing the drill and boredom of repetition. (p. 38)

Perhaps the most outstanding critic on non-promotion was Glasser (1969). He strongly advocated that the major problem of schools is one of failure. He believed that "if a child fails at any stage of his educational career . . . his chances for success in life are greatly

diminished" (p. 5). Glasser proposed that schools should exist without failure.

Godfrey's (1972) major objection to non-promotion is the damaging effect it might have on the self-concept of students. He maintains that not only do failures "doubt their own self worth" but they eventually have little self-confidence in the school and home setting. He is convinced that school failure even more seriously affects the home life of students. Yet, the effect on the school is more tangible.

Consistent with this point of view, Keepes (1973) draws attention to the fact that failure is an endless cycle. He remarks that the normal curve exemplifies the idea that educators demand and expect a certain percentage to fail. "As a result, a certain percentage do fail.

... teachers are not surprised, they expect a certain percentage of failure. The tragedy is that after a period of acculturation - the pupils are not surprised either - they become accustomed to being labeled and grouped even to the extent of being identified as "failures." (p. 2)

Keepes contends that a certain percentage are destined to failure even before they begin.

Bocks (1977) advises that non-promotion is a detestable, futile practice.

"A year to grow" is what some people call it. Flunking, repeating, non-promotion retention or the euphemism, "a year to grow" -- all mean the same thing. . . . One might justifiably ask (although one usually doesn't) "a year to grow what?" (p. 379)

Bocks does not directly answer the question "a year to grow what?" He maintains that in view of the data on the effects of non-promotion one can hardly answer this question favourably.

Despite the firm opinions of Gaité (1969), Funk (1969), Glasser (1969), Godfrey (1972), Keepes (1973), and Bocks (1977), others disagree. Jackson (1975) reviewed over 40 grade retention studies and was



unable to give concrete evidence to support promotion or non-promotion. In a similar view, Finlayson (1975) conducted a study on the effects that grade retention had on self-concept. He found that the self-concept of first graders was not affected by failing.

Cunningham (1977) claims that if students are promoted without meeting academic qualifications, both school and students will eventually meet a more serious failure. Schools will produce some illiterates and students will be ill-equipped to deal with modern living. Handleman (1977) draws attention to the fact that lax promotion standards have resulted in a decline in academic standards. Furthermore, he believes that this trend will continue and might reduce the strength and welfare of a nation. He is convinced that academic standards must be met.

It is evident that the literature does not give definite answers to promotion questions. However, this literature does indicate that a student's welfare must be a concern at all times. This is apparent in Reiter's (1973) statement:

(Promoted or retained) he is not to be branded a chronic failure; not to be compared with others who are not really his peers, is to be helped and listened to and should be encouraged and understood rather than being "beaten down" more and more at home as well as at school. (p. 14)

Those who deplore non-promotion do so on the basis that it is not in the best interest of the student. It is "beating him down." On the other hand, those who condone non-promotion do so on the basis that students must reach certain standards. Otherwise more serious failure looms in later life.

As a result of differing philosophies, a variety of promotion policies exist. Ellis and Gill (1964) indicate that three main types exist:

. . . first the "grades standard" theory which demands a certain level of academic achievement before promoting the student; second the "continuous promotion" theory which provides annual promotion for all students; and the third, the "continuous progress" theory which provides for an upgraded curriculum where promotions are based upon physical, social and emotional factors as well as upon chronological, mental and achievement factors. (p. 11)

Perhaps the key feature of the continuous promotion theory is the absence of grade levels. Walker (1973) states: "Grade levels are absent along with promotion retention machinery" (p. 203). Walker cites the reasons for the success of continuous progress programs as:

- (1) increased achievement as a result of each child reaching his limit in each area of study;
  - (2) elimination of unnecessary retardation of progress for individual students;
  - (3) decreased emotional conflict for individual students;
  - (4) development of positive attitudes towards self and school.
- (p. 208)

Given that the major feature of a grades standard theory is maintenance of academic standards, establishment of grade levels is essential. In describing a grades standards program, Owens (1977) states:

Students must know that advancement from one grade to the next or from a basic course to a more advanced one is based on achievement, not merely on having been enrolled in a grade or course for a year. (p. 532)

Academic achievement is the sole criteria for advancement. Despite this, continuous promotion theorists believe this philosophy creates an overwhelming threat of failure which has to be avoided. Glasser (1969) states:

Because grades [reports] emphasize failure much more than success and because failure is the basis of almost all school problems . . . I suggest that no student ever at any time be labelled a failure or led to believe he is a failure through the use of the grading [reporting] system.

As a result of differing promotion philosophies, numerous grading procedures have evolved. Grading, as defined by Ebersole (1975), is a method of sorting. Grades are usually used to sort levels of achievement as well as distinguish success from failure. They are also used as predictors of future achievement.

Various means of marking or sorting performance have been developed. Kirchenbaun, Napier and Simon (1971) describe some of these. Teachers may complete a written evaluation of student progress without presenting a numerical or letter grade. Students may also be given the responsibility of assessing their own performance. Another procedure involves determining grades but not informing students about the grades even though students are continually advised about their progress.

A system of grading that has little failure is contract grading. Kirchenbaun, Napier and Simon indicate this can be assigned to a class or to students separately. A student is required to complete a prescribed amount of work. Upon completion the student enters a new contract. Similar to contract grading is blanket grading. The essential difference is that students are informed of specified amounts of work needed to obtain a specific grade. A student may decide what grade he wants, and then complete the work to achieve it.

Kirchenbaun, Napier and Simon cite the pass/fail grade as an example of contract and blanket grading. In this case students have reached specified goals within a specified time limit. Successful students receive a pass grade while the remainder receive a fail grade.

Recent innovations in the area of grading indicates educators have been moving away from the grades standard philosophy. However, academic achievement remains an essential component of most grading

procedures.

### Summary

This chapter has examined three key dimensions of student promotion: (1) testing, measurement, and evaluation; (2) policy development; and (3) specific student promotion policies. In view of the analysis of these three areas, it is apparent that accurate student promotion decisions are vital but extremely difficult. Educators must still make student promotion decisions based on their philosophy and usage of evaluation that is not necessarily accurate. Furthermore, these decisions have to be made within a prescribed framework (policy) that might not be sufficiently precise.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Population

The population of this study consisted of all Newfoundland school boards and principals of all Newfoundland central and junior high schools and associated feeder schools. This population was selected for a number of reasons: The population is distributed throughout the entire province, enabling an analysis of Newfoundland student promotion policies regionally and collectively. Principals of all central and junior high schools and associated feeder schools were selected to allow an analysis of promotion policies affecting students advancing from Grade VI to Grade VII and changing schools in the process.

#### Instrument

Ellis and Gill (1964) studied teacher and administrator opinions of student promotion policies in secondary schools of metro Toronto using a questionnaire. In this study an adapted version of this questionnaire was administered to school boards and principals (Appendices A and B).

The questionnaire is divided into three major sections. Sections one and two attempt to determine the nature of the organization's student promotion policy as perceived by the respondent. More specifically, the first section provides a list of policy statements. The

respondent was asked to indicate the extent to which these are practised. Statements are concerned with: minimum standards of achievement, passing major subjects, amount of time in a grade, chronological age, skipping material of a grade, consideration of factors other than academic achievement and promotion regardless of academic achievement.

The second part of the instrument presents reasons for non-promotion of borderline students in view of board/school promotion practices. Such reasons include: mastery level of the grade, ability to handle work of next grade, attitude, physical maturity, work and study habits, effort, class behaviour attendance records, marks in relation to class ability to learn, and social maturity.

In sections one and two, respondents had four response choices. They were "always," "usually," "rarely," or "never." Respondents were not given the option of "undecided" even though this response was considered in the analysis of data. Response categories were sometimes combined when there were not enough responses in each category to perform Chi-square analysis. As an example, "always" and "usually" may be altered to "always or usually."

Section three of the instrument focuses on promotion policy regulations. Questions dealing with conditional promotion, promotion during the year, and the making of promotional decisions were asked.

#### Instrument Validation and Pilot Study

To ensure face and content validity of the questionnaire the following precautions were taken. First, it was assumed face and content validity were present in the original format of the instrument when used by Ellis and Gill in a 1964 Toronto study. They made certain of validity by having the instrument developed by a committee of the



Metropolitan Toronto Educational Research Council. It was revised several times until approved by the entire Council. The questionnaire was then presented to similar respondents for comment and completion.

Second, literature concerning various promotional practices was thoroughly researched by the writer. After completion of this, the instrument was examined for possible corrections. Several changes were made as a result of this.

To further ensure that all questionnaire items were explicit and representative of student promotion policies in Newfoundland schools, the instrument was examined by all Educational Administration professors within the Faculty of Education of Memorial University of Newfoundland. It was analyzed by 11 full-time graduates in the said department. Additions and deletions were made in compliance with suggestions from these individuals.

A fourth step was also taken to guarantee validity. A pilot study was undertaken to determine if a population sample perceived the instrument to be an accurate indicator of various Newfoundland student promotion policies. The questionnaire was administered to an assistant superintendent, a junior high principal and an elementary school principal within the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board. These individuals were asked to complete the questionnaire and then provide information on clarity, preciseness and appropriateness of each questionnaire item. They were also asked to suggest additional items to be included. No further changes were made on the basis of this procedure. Because of this, responses from the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board were included in the final study.

### Administration of the Questionnaire

Prior to mailing the questionnaire to principals, a letter was sent to all superintendents on April 14, 1980. Superintendents were asked to complete the questionnaire and at the same time grant permission to have principals in their districts included in the study. Within three weeks, 16 superintendents had replied. At this time all remaining superintendents were telephoned. Permission was granted in all cases and superintendents committed themselves to complete the questionnaire. By May 5, 1980 questionnaires were mailed to all principals. After four weeks had elapsed, 70 per cent returned the completed questionnaire. A follow-up letter was mailed May 30, 1980 to those who did not reply. All questionnaires received up to June 16, 1980 were included in the final study. After the follow-up letter, an additional 10 per cent responded. Table 1 presents the number and percentage of returns for each group represented in the study. Of the 35 questionnaires mailed to boards, 29 responses were received (82.9%).

TABLE 1  
NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGE OF RETURNS

Group	Total Number	Number of Returns	Percentage of Returns
Board	35	29	82.9
Central/Junior High	114	99	86.8
Feeder School	232	175	75.4
Total	381	303	79.5

In the central/junior high group 99 of 114, or 86.8 per cent, returned the questionnaire. Over 75 per cent of feeder schools replied. In summary, 303 of 381 responded for a total response rate of 80 per cent.

All correspondence related to this matter is presented in Appendix B.

### Reliability

Given the nature of this instrument, the process of establishing a measure of reliability was altered. The reasons for this were twofold. First, the central idea encompassed in each item on the instrument is derived from a previous student promotion study (Ellis & Gill, 1964). This study was approved and administered to a similar sample of respondents in another province and it is assumed that the reliability presumably in effect then, is applicable to this situation. Ellis and Gill used a questionnaire prepared by a committee of the Metropolitan Toronto Educational Research Council. It was revised several times based on the recommendations of the entire Council. The questionnaire was then presented to teachers, department heads, guidance counsellors, principals, vice-principals of junior high, high, commercial technical and composite schools for comment and completion. Secondly, split-half and Kuder-Richardson coefficients are reflective of the internal consistency of the instrument sub-parts, based on response to that instrument. In this case, even if the instrument items were arranged so as to reflect a high measure of reliability based on internal consistency, the results could be misleading at best. This reliability would only indicate that the items located within each sub-part of the instrument are cohesive and therefore measure the same characteristic. However, the goal to be achieved through usage of this instrument focuses on the overall response pattern to the instrument as a whole and therefore, as previously stated, cohesiveness of individual items is not a concern. Hence, establishment of a reliability coefficient in the traditional sense was not undertaken.

### Analysis of Data

All data were computer analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (1970). Several statistical operations were completed. In order to accomplish this, the questionnaire was coded. Parts one and two presented no coding difficulty. In order to code part three, all responses to each item were recorded and then divided into categories of distinct response. In no case were different responses included in the same category since each new response resulted in a new category.

Utilizing this approach, questions alluded to in the statement of the problem were analyzed as follows: For questions one, two and three, distributions and mean responses were found for each questionnaire item. Results were tabularly presented. To answer question four, Chi-square tests of significance were used. Question five was answered by determining correlations for central/junior high and their respective feeder schools. A Pearson Product Moment correlation was performed on the first 28 questionnaire items. Average central/junior high and associated feeder school correlations were determined for each board. To do a more indepth correlation analysis, the lowest one-third of correlations were compared with the highest one-third. Furthermore, central/junior high schools having high or low correlations with more than one of their feeder schools were examined in detail.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents an analysis of the data gathered from use of the instrument. Information in this chapter is organized so that each of the questions presented in the statement of the problem is discussed in its respective numerical order.

#### Question 1

What differences exist among perceptions of school board student promotion policies?

#### Promotion Practices

Table 2 presents statistics on board response to policy statements. An analysis of the table reveals that five items had a mean less than two. Of the 29 boards surveyed, 28 (96.6%) said "minimum standards of academic achievement must be met in order to be promoted" was always or usually a practice. Only one board said it was rarely a practice. Similarly, 86.2 per cent (25) said "a student is promoted to the next higher grade when all academic requirements of the present level are met" was always or usually a practice.

Boards were divided in responding to statement C, "students whose academic achievement is borderline are conditionally promoted to the next grade." Slightly more than half said this was rarely a practice, while 14 (48.2%) said that this was always or usually a practice. The mean response was 2.57.

TABLE 2

## DISTRIBUTION OF PROMOTIONAL PRACTICES BY BOARD

Policy Statement	RESPONSES					Mean
	No Response f.(%)	Always f.(%)	Usually f.(%)	Rarely f.(%)	Never f.(%)	
A. Minimum standards of academic achievement are specified for each grade level and students must meet these standards in order to be promoted.	0(0)	10(34.5)	18(62.1)	1(3.4)	0(0)	1.69
B. A student is promoted to the next higher subject level when all academic requirements of the present level are achieved.	0(0)	11(37.9)	14(48.3)	4(13.8)	0(0)	1.76
C. Students whose academic achievement is borderline are conditionally promoted to the next grade.	0(0)	1(3.4)	13(44.8)	15(51.7)	0(0)	2.57
D. Students are not promoted if their marks are below the passing standard in any one of the major subjects (e.g., Math, English, Science).	0(0)	4(13.8)	21(72.4)	2(6.9)	2(6.9)	2.06
E. No student remains in any grade for more than two years.	0(0)	13(44.8)	13(44.8)	3(10.3)	0	1.65
F. No student spends more than three years completing two consecutive grades.	0(0)	5(17.2)	15(51.7)	5(17.2)	4(13.8)	2.28
G. No student is permitted to spend less than three years completing three grades.	0(0)	11(37.9)	6(20.7)	7(24.1)	5(17.2)	2.21
H. Skipping (e.g., omitting the work of a grade) is permitted.	0(0)	1(3.4)	15(51.7)	13(44.8)	0(0)	3.4



TABLE 2. (Continued)

Policy Statement	RESPONSES					Mean
	No Response f. (%)	Always f. (%)	Usually f. (%)	Rarely f. (%)	Never f. (%)	
I. Chronological age is a factor in determining promotion.	0(0)	0(0)	20(69)	9(31)	0(0)	2.31
J. Students are permitted to get out of their social group through either acceleration or retardation.	1(3.4)	0(0)	9(31)	19(65.6)	0(0)	2.68
K. The multi-factor approach to promotion or non-promotion decisions is used (chronological age, social maturity, academic achievement, emotional status, physical maturity, etc.).	1(3.4)	12(41.4)	12(41.4)	4(13.8)	9(0)	1.71
L. A student is promoted regardless of how low his level of success in academic subjects.	0(0)	0(3.4)	2(6.9)	15(51.8)	11(37.9)	3.32
M. The student has to be able to demonstrate his level of academic performance in order to be promoted.	0(0)	3(10.3)	24(82.8)	2(6.9)	0(0)	1.97

However, 25 respondents (86.2%) stated "students must pass all the major subjects" was always or usually a practice. Of these, for 72.4 per cent it was usually a practice. Two boards maintained that this is never practised in their board, while an additional two maintained it is rarely practised.

There was considerable consensus on Item E. This item states that no student remains in any grade for more than two years. Over 89 per cent responded by saying that this is always or usually a practice. The remaining three boards (10.3%) said it was rarely a practice.

Although Item F was not practised to the same extent as Item E, the practice is prevalent in 20 boards. These boards said that no student spends more than three years completing two consecutive grades. Despite its prevalence 17 per cent concluded that it was never a practice, whereas 44.8 per cent said Item E was always a practice.

Opinion was widely divided on Items G and H. Item G refers to accelerating student programs while Item H suggests the deletion of material from student programs. On both items, approximately 13 respondents indicated that this is rarely or never a practice. Over 37 per cent said Item G is always a practice while 3.4 per cent believed Item H is rarely practised. A larger percentage felt that Item H is usually or rarely a practice.

Over two-thirds of boards indicated that chronological age is usually a factor in determining promotion. The remaining third maintained that it is rarely a factor. Regarding Item J, more than two-thirds of boards permit students to get out of their social group through either acceleration or retardation. However, nine boards (31%) stated that this is usually practised.

Response to Item K, "the multi-factor approach to promotion or non-promotion decisions is used" showed considerable agreement. Twenty-four boards (82.8%) said that this was always or usually a practice. Half of the respondents said "always" while the remaining said "usually." Similar to Item J, one board did not respond.

Item L produced the highest mean, 3.32. A high mean indicates that the statement is never or rarely practised. In this case "a student is promoted regardless of how low his level of success in academic subjects" is rarely (51.8%) or never (37.9%) practised. Despite this high mean, two boards did indicate that this is usually a practice.

The final policy statement also revealed board agreement. Slightly more than 93 per cent support the statement "the student must be able to demonstrate his level of academic performance in order to be promoted." More than 82 per cent stated this was usually a practice for their board. However, two other boards maintained that this was rarely practised within the board.

#### Reasons for Non-Promotion

In considering these reasons for non-promotion, it must be remembered that they apply to borderline students whose promotion is in doubt. Table 3 presents this data. Mastering the work of a grade is a must. Twenty-eight boards stated that if a student had not mastered the work of the grade it is "always" or "usually" a reason for non-promotion. One board asserted that this is not a valid reason in deciding non-promotion.

Ability to handle the work of the next grade held considerable importance in view of board response. Twenty-six boards believed that lack of this ability is always or usually a reason in deciding

TABLE 3

## DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS FOR NON-PROMOTION BY BOARD

Reason for Non-Promotion	RESPONSES					Mean
	No Response f.(%)	Always f.(%)	Usually f.(%)	Rarely f.(%)	Never f.(%)	
A. He has not mastered the work of the grade.	0(0)	9(31)	19(65.5)	1(3.4)	0(0)	1.72
B. He would not be able to handle the work of the next grade.	0(0)	10(34.5)	16(55.2)	3(10.3)	0(0)	1.76
C. He has a poor attitude towards school.	0(0)	0(0)	7(24.1)	10(34.5)	12(41.4)	3.17
D. He is physically immature for his age.	0(0)	0(0)	4(13.8)	12(41.4)	13(44.8)	3.31
E. He habitually works far below his grade.	1(3.4)	5(17.2)	16(55.2)	6(20.7)	1(3.4)	2.10
F. He has very poor study habits.	0(0)	0(0)	7(24.1)	13(44.8)	9(31.1)	3.06
G. He needs to learn that effort is required for success in school work.	0(0)	0(0)	9(31.0)	8(27.6)	12(41.4)	3.10
H. His attendance record has been very poor.	0(0)	0(0)	9(31.0)	13(44.8)	7(24.1)	2.93
I. He has frequently been a trouble-maker in class.	0(0)	0(0)	1(3.4)	12(41.4)	16(55.2)	3.52
J. He is rather sickly and seems to lack vitality.	0(0)	0(0)	1(3.4)	10(34.5)	18(62.1)	3.59
K. His marks are borderline and he needs a firmer foundation before going on to more advanced work.	0(0)	2(6.9)	16(55.2)	9(31.0)	2(6.9)	2.38

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Reason for Non-Promotion	RESPONSES					Mean
	No Response f. (%)	Always f. (%)	Usually f. (%)	Rarely f. (%)	Never f. (%)	
L. He is a slow learner.	0(0)	0(0)	13(44.8)	9(31.0)	7(24.1)	2.79
M. His marks rank him near to the bottom of his class.	2(6.8)	0(0)	6(20.7)	12(41.4)	9(31.1)	3.11
N. He is frequently inattentive during classroom lessons.	0(0)	0(0)	2(6.9)	10(34.5)	17(58.6)	3.52
O. His social maturity is considered below average for his grade level.	0(0)	0(0)	8(27.6)	10(34.5)	11(37.9)	3.10



non-promotion of borderline students. Three boards indicated that this is not a reason.

Over 75 per cent of boards affirmed that a poor attitude towards school is rarely or never a valid reason for non-promotion. The remaining 24.1 per cent indicated that it is usually a valid reason.

The statement "he is physically immature for his age" was overwhelmingly rejected by 25 boards. Of these 25, 13 said it was never a valid reason. However, four other boards did say it was usually a valid reason.

There was less agreement on the next item. Twenty-one (72.4%) of boards declared the reason "he habitually works far below his grade" is always or usually a valid reason for non-promotion. More than 17 per cent responded "always." This was considered rarely or never a valid reason by seven boards, or 25 per cent of the total. One board did not respond to this item.

Poor study habits are not considered to be a non-promotion reason for many boards. In fact, nine boards (31.1%) said that it is never a reason. A total of 22 boards (75.9%) advocated it is rarely or never a valid reason. The remaining boards contend that it is usually a reason.

A majority of boards indicated that a poor attendance record is not a valid non-promotion reason. Twenty boards (68.9%) indicated this view. On the other hand, nine boards (31%) said it is usually a reason.

Very few boards claimed "being a trouble-maker in class is grounds for non-promotion." Only one board expressed that it was usually a practice, while the remaining 28 maintained it is rarely or



never a reason. Similarly, Item J, "he is rather sickly and seems to lack vitality" produced strong reaction. This item had a mean (3.59) slightly higher than the previous item (3.52). In view of these means, these reasons appear to be rarely practised. Eighteen boards stated it is never a reason, 10 held the belief that it is rarely a reason, and one said it is usually a reason.

Comment was divided concerning "the student needs a firmer foundation before going on." Sixty-two per cent said this is a valid basis in deciding non-promotion. Almost 7 per cent concluded "always" while about 55 per cent concluded that it was "usually" a valid reason. Contrary to this, 31 per cent believed it is rarely a reason while the remaining 7 per cent said "never a valid reason."

There was limited consensus on Item L, "he is a slow learner." Thirteen boards said it was usually a reason while 16 said it was rarely or never. From those 16, seven boards said it was never a reason.

Item M had a relatively high mean indicating it is rarely or never a valid non-promotion reason. Thirty-one per cent stated it is rarely used, while 24.1 per cent expressed the belief that it is never a reason. The remaining respondents, 44.8 per cent, indicated it is usually a reason.

Six boards affirmed that the statement "his marks/rank him near to the bottom of his class" is usually a valid reason for non-promotion. Despite this, nine said it is never a reason and an additional 12 held the belief that it is rarely a reason. The high mean indicated that most boards rarely or never place great importance on this item.

Inattentiveness during classroom lessons produced much consistency in response. Twenty-seven of 29 boards said it was rarely or never a basis for non-promotion. Ten responded "rarely" and 17 said "never." The remaining two declared this is "usually a reason" for non-promotion.

Response to the final listed reason for non-promotion, "his social maturity is considered below average for his grade level" demonstrated much inconsistency. Eight respondents maintained this is usually a reason for deciding non-promotion of borderline students. The remaining 21 boards claimed that this is rarely or never a reason. Eleven of these 21 advocated it is never a reason.

#### Administrative Regulations

Respondents were asked five questions concerning the administrative regulations governing student promotion policies. Table 4 presents this data in frequency and percentage form.

No board has a generally accepted practice or tradition specifying the percentage of students who should be promoted. However, responses concerning conditional promotion varied. Three quarters of boards permit conditional promotion while the remaining quarter does not. Of the number who permit conditional promotion, six distinct definitions of conditional were derived.

Seven boards (24.1%) described conditional as "the student must show improvement early in the term." Four (13.8%) responded by saying students must do satisfactory work at summer school. Four others defined conditional as "successfully completing supplementary exams." Two described conditional as meaning "all borderline students are promoted." "A student must do well in the next grade; if not, the

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS  
CONCERNING ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS, BY BOARD

A. Does your board have a generally accepted practice or tradition specifying the percentage of students who should be promoted?

	f. (%)
No response	0(0)
Yes	0(0)
No	29(100)

B. Does your school permit "conditional" promotion at the end of June?

	f. (%)
No response	0(0)
Yes	22(75.9)
No	7(24.1)

If your answer is "yes" please explain what is meant by the term "conditional".

	f. (%)
Not applicable	7(24.1)
No response	3(10.3)
Do satisfactory work at summer school	4(13.8)
Show improvement early in next term	7(24.1)
Write supplementary exams	4(13.8)
Do well in next grade, if not the student will have to repeat that grade	1(3.5)
Promoted without a diploma	1(3.5)
Promoted but placed in remedial classes	0(0)
All borderline students are promoted	2(6.9)

C. Does your board permit promotion during the year (other than in June)?

	f. (%)
No response	0(0)
Yes	12(41.4)
No	17(58.6)

TABLE 4 (Continued)

## C. If your answer is "yes" please explain.

	f. (%)
No response	0(0)
Permitted but rarely practiced	13(44.8)
Not applicable	12(41.4)
Exceptional children are permitted to advance at their own pace	0(0)
Students may be promoted in various subjects throughout the year	1(3.4)
Students are promoted to different levels within grades	3(10.3)

## D. By whom is the promotion or non-promotion of individual students discussed?

	f. (%)
Teacher	0(0)
Teacher and principal	6(20.7)
Teacher, principal and parents	0(0)
Staff	15(51.7)
Staff and parents	4(13.8)
Staff and board personnel	3(10.3)
Staff, parents and students	1(3.4)
No response	

## E. Who makes the final decision about the promotion or non-promotion of individual students?

	f. (%)
Teacher	2(6.9)
Teacher and principal	5(17.2)
Principal	17(58.6)
Teacher, principal and parents	0(0)
Staff	3(10.3)
Superintendent	2(6.9)
Promotion committee	0(0)
No response	0(0)

student will have to repeat that grade" is the way one board described conditional promotion. Another explained conditional to mean "promotion without a diploma." No board described conditional as "promotion to a remedial class." An additional three boards did not respond to this part of the question.

In response to question C, 12 of 29 boards permit promotion during the year. Four explanations of "promotion during the year" were provided. Even though 17 boards do not permit this, five provided comment. Thus, 12 "not applicable" responses were recorded. Thirteen said it was permitted but the occasion to practice it rarely arises. Three boards explained that students are promoted to different levels within grades. Another board replied by saying students are promoted on a subject basis. No board responded by saying "exceptional children are permitted to advance at their own pace."

When boards were asked "with whom is the promotion or non-promotion of individual students discussed?" five different responses were given. Fifteen answered by saying staff. Six replied that the teacher and principal discuss the matter. Four boards include staff and parents. Another board includes staff and parents but also students. One did not respond.

In responding to who makes the final decision, 17 said it was the principals. Five concluded by saying it was the principal and teacher's decision. An additional three said it was staff responsibility. Two maintained it was the teacher's decision, while two other boards believed it was the superintendent's authority.

Question 2

What differences exist among perceptions of central/junior high school student promotion policies?

Promotion Practices

Table 5 reveals central/junior high school responses to the 14 policy statements set forth in the questionnaire. Ninety-eight per cent of these principals stated that Item A is always or usually a practice. Only 2 per cent said "minimum standards of academic achievement have to be met" is never the practice.

The second statement also has a low mean. In fact 91.9 per cent affirmed that it is always or usually a practice to promote a student only when he has met the academic requirements of the present level. Slightly more than 6 per cent held the opinion that this is rarely or never the case.

The third item was the only one that received full response. Sixty per cent advocated conditional promotion is always or usually the practice. The remaining number asserted it is rarely or never a practice. Of the 60 per cent who said it is always or usually a practice, 57 per cent remarked it is usually a practice.

Eighty principals indicated that a student must pass all major subjects in order to be promoted. They maintained it is "always" or "usually" a practice. Contrary to this, another 16 said it is rarely or never a practice.

"No student remains in any grade for more than two years" is always or usually a practice of 87 respondents. Ten declared it is rarely or never the case.



TABLE 5

## DISTRIBUTION OF PROMOTION PRACTICES BY CENTRAL/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Policy Statement	RESPONSES					Mean
	No Response f. (%)	Always f. (%)	Usually f. (%)	Rarely f. (%)	Never f. (%)	
A. Minimum standards of academic achievement are specified for each grade level and students must meet these standards in order to be promoted.	1(1)	47(47.4)	49(49.5)	0(0)	2(2)	1.54
B. A student is promoted to the next higher subject level when all academic requirements of the present level are achieved.	2(2)	38(38.4)	53(53.5)	4(4.1)	2(2)	1.67
C. Students whose academic achievement is borderline are conditionally promoted to the next grade.	0(0)	3(3)	57(57.6)	29(29.3)	10(10.1)	2.46
D. Students are not promoted if their marks are below the passing standard in any one of the major subjects (e.g., Math, English, Science).	3(3)	28(28.3)	52(52.6)	13(13.1)	3(3)	1.91
E. No student remains in any grade for more than two years.	2(2)	37(37.5)	50(50.5)	7(7)	3(3)	1.72
F. No student spends more than three years completing two consecutive grades.	3(3)	17(17.2)	39(39.4)	21(21.2)	19(19.2)	2.44
G. No student is permitted to spend less than three years completing three grades.	2(2)	44(44.5)	27(27.3)	12(12.1)	14(14.1)	1.96

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Policy Statement	RESPONSES					Mean
	No. Response f. (%)	Always f. (%)	Usually f. (%)	Rarely f. (%)	Never f. (%)	
H. Skipping (e.g., omitting the work of a grade) is permitted.	1(1)	1(1)	2(2)	29(29.3)	66(66.7)	3.64
I. Chronological age is a factor in determining promotion.	1(1)	8(8.1)	51(51.5)	35(35.4)	4(4)	2.36
J. Students are permitted to get out of their social group through either acceleration or retardation.	5(5.1)	5(5.1)	36(36.3)	40(40.4)	13(13.1)	2.65
K. The multi-factor approach to promotion or non-promotion decisions is used (chronological age, social maturity, academic achievement, emotional status, physical maturity, etc.).	1(1)	34(34.3)	52(52.6)	12(12.1)	0(0)	1.78
L. A student is promoted regardless of how low his level of success in academic subjects.	1(1)	2(2)	1(1)	35(35.4)	60(60.6)	3.58
M. The student has to be able to demonstrate his level of academic performance in order to be promoted.	2(2)	18(18.2)	76(76.8)	2(2)	1(1)	1.85

There was less consensus for the statement "no student spends more than three years completing two consecutive grades." Fifty-six believed this is "always" or "usually" the practice, while 40 of the 99 said it is rarely or never the case.

The item concerning skipping of material produced the highest mean. Stated another way, of all items this is least practised by central/junior high schools. Only three held the belief that this is always or usually the practice of their school. Ninety-five principals contended that this is rarely or never a practice.

Opinion concerning the importance of chronological age was divided. Fifty-nine central/junior high schools advocated that consideration of chronological age is "always" or "usually" a practice. Fifty-one of these 59 said it is usually a practice. Yet another 39 remarked it is rarely a practice.

The highest "no response" was recorded for Item J. Five did not answer this question. Forty-one indicated that the statement, "students are permitted to get out of their social group through either acceleration or retardation" is "always" or "usually" the case. But 53 said it is rarely or never a practice.

There was considerable agreement on Item K. Eighty-six central/junior high schools advocated that the multi-factor approach is always or usually the practice. Thirty-four of these 86 said "always." Twelve principals answered by stating it is "rarely a practice."

"A student is promoted regardless of how low his level of success in academic subjects" is not practised by many schools. Only three indicated this to be the case. Sixty expressed "never a practice"

while 35 declared it is "rarely a practice." This item had a mean of 3.58.

The practice described in Item L is widely used. Ninety-four principals asserted that "the student has to be able to demonstrate his level of academic performance in order to be promoted" is always or usually a practice. Seventy-six stated "usually." The principals of three central/junior highs stated it is rarely or never a practice.

#### Reasons for Non-Promotion

Data in Table 6 is the response of principals in central/junior high schools to the second section of the questionnaire. Response to "he has not mastered the work of the grade" produced the lowest mean. This indicates the statement is a valid reason in deciding non-promotion of borderline students. In fact 97 of 99 schools maintained this is "always" or "usually" a practice. Forty-five stated this was always a practice. Only one school indicated it is rarely a practice.

Similarly, responses to the second item is characterized by a low mean. Ninety-three schools believed "lacking the ability to handle the work of the next grade" is always or usually a valid non-promotion reason. Fifty-eight responded always. However, six schools replied it is rarely a reason in deciding non-promotion.

Many principals did not place importance on a student's attitude towards school. Seventy of 99 principals indicated this to be so. However, 28 principals held the opinion that this is "always" or "usually" a practice.

One of the highest means (3.32) was reached on Item O, "he is physically immature for his age." Eighty-four respondents remarked that this is rarely or never a good reason. Forty principals said

TABLE 6  
DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS FOR NON-PROMOTION BY  
CENTRAL/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Reason for Non-Promotion	RESPONSES					Mean
	No Response f. (%)	Always f. (%)	Usually f. (%)	Rarely f. (%)	Never f. (%)	
A. He has not mastered the work of the grade.	1(1)	45(45.4)	52(52.6)	1(1)	0(0)	1.55
B. He would not be able to handle the work of the next grade.	0(0)	35(35.4)	58(58.6)	6(6)	0(0)	1.71
C. He has a poor attitude towards school.	1(1)	2(2)	26(26.3)	52(52.6)	18(18.1)	2.90
D. He is physically immature for his age.	2(2)	2(2)	11(11.0)	40(40.4)	44(44.5)	3.32
E. He habitually works far below his grade.	2(2)	13(13.1)	58(58.6)	23(23.3)	3(3)	2.16
F. He has very poor study habits.	1(1)	3(3)	41(41.4)	40(40.4)	14(14.2)	2.69
G. He needs to learn that effort is required for success in school work.	2(2)	5(5.1)	35(35.4)	39(39.4)	18(18.1)	2.77
H. His attendance record has been very poor.	1(1)	5(5.1)	36(36.4)	39(39.4)	18(18.1)	2.77
I. He has frequently been a trouble-maker in class.	1(1)	0(0)	12(12.2)	45(45.4)	41(41.4)	3.30
J. He is rather sickly and seems to lack vitality.	1(1)	1(1)	4(4)	34(34.4)	59(59.6)	3.55
K. His marks are borderline and he needs a firmer foundation before going on to more advanced work.	1(1)	12(12.2)	52(52.5)	28(28.2)	6(6.1)	2.28

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Reason for Non-Promotion	RESPONSES					Mean
	No Response f. (%)	Always f. (%)	Usually f. (%)	Rarely f. (%)	Never f. (%)	
L. He is a slow learner.	1(1)	4(4)	39(39.4)	41(41.4)	14(14.2)	2.70
M. His marks rank him near to the bottom of his class.	4(4)	5(5.1)	19(19.2)	44(44.5)	27(27.2)	3.03
N. He is frequently inattentive during classroom lessons.	3(3)	0(0)	16(16.2)	54(54.6)	26(26.2)	3.10
O. His social maturity is considered below average for his grade level.	1(1)	0(0)	16(16.2)	57(57.6)	25(25.2)	3.09



rarely, and 44 said never. An additional 13 said that this is "always" or "usually" a practice.

The next item resulted in the widest division among respondents. Forty-four principals believed study habits "are always or usually a reason in deciding non-promotion." A further 54 maintained this is "rarely" or "never" a reason. Forty-one schools said "usually" and 40 said "rarely."

The statement "he needs to learn that effort is required for success in school work" also had a wide range in opinion. Forty central/junior high schools expressed the opinion that it is always or usually a valid non-promotion reason. Despite this, 57 indicated it is rarely or never the case. Of this 57, 18 said never.

Response to Item H is very similar to the previous item. Forty-one said poor attendance record is "always" or "usually" a valid reason for non-promotion. Fifty-seven advanced it is "rarely" or "never" a reason. Item G and H had the same mean.

"Being a trouble-maker in class" was ruled out by many as a reason in deciding non-promotion. Eighty-six of 99 principals held the opinion that this is rarely or never used in reaching a decision. Approximately half said "rarely" and the other said "never." Twelve replied that it is "usually" a valid non-promotion reason.

Item J had the highest mean (3.55). Most of the schools (93) concluded that "he is rather sickly and seems to lack vitality" had no influence in making a promotion decision. Fifty-nine claimed this is never a practice. However, five schools replied it is "always" or "usually" grounds for non-promotion.

Many principals agreed that "a student needs a firmer foundation before going on," is a valid consideration in deciding non-promotion. Twelve expressed that this is "always" a consideration, while 52 other principals said it is "usually" a consideration. Contrary to this belief, 34 feel it is "rarely" or "never" a valid reason in deciding non-promotion of a borderline student.

Opinion was limited in assessing the influence of being a slow learner. Less than half (43) advocated it is a reason while 55 principals indicated it is "rarely" or "never" a reason. More specifically, 41 said "rarely," while 14 replied "never."

The majority of principals stated that if a student's marks ranked him near the bottom of his class, it had little bearing on whether he is promoted or not. This is the opinion of 71 of the central/junior high principals. But 24 indicated this is "always" or "usually" a valid reason. Of the 71 principals who said it is not, 44 said rarely and 27 indicated never a valid reason.

A small number of principals used the statement "he is frequently inattentive during classroom lessons" as a non-promotion reason. Sixteen said this was the case. However, 80 disagreed, indicating it is "rarely" or "never" a practice.

Response to the last item is almost identical to Item N. Sixteen usually considered social maturity in deciding non-promotion of borderline students. Yet this is rarely or never considered by 82 principals. Fifty-seven participants said it is "rarely" a valid reason.

Administrative Regulations

Table 7 presents data received from the third section of the questionnaire. In response to the first question, five indicated that they normally have a practice or tradition specifying the percentage who should be promoted. Ninety-four answered no.

Conditional promotion appears to be a debatable topic among principals. More than half (54) permitted conditional promotion, but 44 principals claimed it is not permitted in their schools. Furthermore, a variety of conditional definitions were given. Despite 44 "no responses," 42 "not applicables" were recorded because the remaining two responded. "Do satisfactory work at summer school" received the most responses. Fourteen referred to this as their definition. Thirteen principals feel conditional implies "a student must show improvement early in the next term, if not he is placed back to the original grade." Eleven more advocated the writing of supplementary exams. Student promotion depended on the outcome of these exams. Principals of four schools deem conditional to mean that a student must do well in the next year, if not the student will have to repeat that grade. An additional two principals suggested that all borderline students are promoted while another stated they are promoted without a diploma. Five principals did not complete this question. No principal described conditional to mean "promoted but placed in a remedial class."

Many schools do not permit promotion during the year. Seventy-nine schools revealed that this is the case. One principal did not respond while the remaining 19 indicated this not to be the case. In describing promotion during the year, a variety of answers surfaced. Thirteen replied that even though it is permitted, it is rarely

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS  
CONCERNING ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS, BY CENTRAL/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

A. Does your school have a generally accepted practice or tradition specifying the percentage of students who should be promoted?

	f. (%)
No response	1(1)
Yes	4(4)
No	94(95)

B. Does your school permit "conditional" promotion at the end of June?

	f. (%)
No response	1(1)
Yes	54(54.6)
No	44(44.4)

If your answer is "yes" please explain what is meant by the term "conditional".

	f. (%)
Not applicable	42(42.5)
No response	5(5.1)
Do satisfactory work at summer school	14(14.2)
Show improvement early in next term	13(13.1)
Write supplementary exams	11(11.1)
Do well in next grade, if not the student will have to repeat that grade	4(4)
Promoted without a diploma	1(1)
Promoted but placed in remedial classes	0(0)
All borderline students are promoted	2(2)

C. Does your school permit promotion during the year (other than in June)?

	f. (%)
No response	1(1)
Yes	19(19.2)
No	79(79.8)

TABLE 7. (Continued)

## C. If your answer is "yes" please explain.

	f. (%)
No response	2(2)
Permitted but rarely practiced	13(13.1)
Not applicable	79(79.8)
Exceptional children are permitted to advance at their own pace	2(2)
Students may be promoted in various subjects throughout the year	5(5.1)
Students are promoted to different levels within grades	3(3)

## D. By whom is the promotion or non-promotion of individual students discussed?

	f. (%)
Teacher	5(5.1)
Teacher and principal	12(12.1)
Teacher, principal and parents	1(1)
Staff	73(73.8)
Staff and parents	2(2)
Staff and board personnel	3(3)
Staff, parents and students	2(2)
No response	1(1)

## E. Who makes the final decision about the promotion or non-promotion of individual students?

	f. (%)
Teacher	2(2)
Teacher and principal	20(20.2)
Principal	60(60.6)
Teacher, principal and parents	0(0)
Staff	16(16.2)
Superintendent	0(0)
Promotion committee	1(1)
No response	0(0)



practised. Five indicated that students could be promoted on a subject basis, while three maintained students are promoted to different levels within grades. "Exceptional children are permitted to advance at their own pace" is how another two explained "conditional."

When asked "with whom is promotion or non-promotion of individual students discussed?," 73 participants indicated "staff." "Teacher and principal" was the response of 12. Five schools said it was the teacher, three maintained "staff and board personnel," while two indicated it was "staff and parents." Three principals involved students. One principal did not respond to this question. All principals responded to "who has the final decision about the promotion or non-promotion of individual students?" Eighty principals stated the principal was involved. Sixty respondents revealed it is solely the principal's decision, while 20 hold the belief that it is the "teacher and principal." "Staff" is how another 16 replied. Only two schools left the final decision to the teacher. Furthermore, an additional school had a promotion committee established as a means of determining promotion or non-promotion of students.

### Question 3

What differences exist among perceptions of selected elementary school (feeder school) student promotion policies?

#### Promotion Practices

Table 8 illustrates reaction of feeder school principals to policy statements presented in the first part of the questionnaire. The first item is practised widely. This item states that minimum standards of achievement must be obtained. Eighty-eight per cent (154) expressed this is "always" or "usually" a practice. Ninety-six or



TABLE 8

## DISTRIBUTION OF PROMOTION PRACTICES BY FEEDER SCHOOLS.

Policy Statement	RESPONSES					Mean
	No Response f.(%)	Always f.(%)	Usually f.(%)	Rarely f.(%)	Never f.(%)	
A. Minimum standards of academic achievement are specified for each grade level and students must meet these standards in order to be promoted.	2(1.1)	58(33.1)	96(54.9)	8(4.5)	11(6.3)	1.77
B. A student is promoted to the next higher subject level when all academic requirements of the present level are achieved.	1(.6)	51(29.2)	105(60)	10(5.7)	8(4.5)	1.81
C. Students whose academic achievement is borderline are conditionally promoted to the next grade.	1(.6)	7(4)	84(48)	60(34.3)	23(13.1)	2.60
D. Students are not promoted if their marks are below the passing standard in any one of the major subjects (e.g., Math, English, Science).	1(.6)	34(19.4)	99(56.6)	32(18.3)	9(5.1)	2.09
E. No student remains in any grade for more than two years.	1(.6)	116(66.3)	49(28)	2(1.1)	7(4)	1.38
F. No student spends more than three years completing two consecutive grades.	4(2.3)	54(30.9)	80(45.5)	22(12.6)	15(8.5)	1.99
G. No student is permitted to spend less than three years completing three grades.	2(1.1)	70(40)	66(37.7)	22(12.6)	15(8.6)	1.89

TABLE 8 (Continued)

Policy Statement	RESPONSES					Mean
	No Response f.(%)	Always f.(%)	Usually f.(%)	Rarely f.(%)	Never f.(%)	
H. Skipping (e.g., omitting the work of a grade) is permitted.	1(.6)	4(2.3)	4(2.3)	87(49.7)	79(45.1)	3.40
I. Chronological age is a factor in determining promotion.	4(2.3)	28(16)	101(57.7)	38(21.7)	4(2.3)	2.10
J. Students are permitted to get out of their social group through either acceleration or retardation.	17(9.7)	5(2.9)	58(33.1)	75(42.9)	20(11.4)	2.69
K. The multi-factor approach to promotion or non-promotion decisions is used (chronological age, social maturity, academic achievement, emotional status, physical maturity, etc.).	0(0)	95(54.3)	73(41.7)	7(4)	0(0)	1.50
L. A student is promoted regardless of how low his level of success in academic subjects.	1(.6)	2(1.1)	5(2.9)	80(45.7)	87(49.7)	3.46
M. The student has to be able to demonstrate his level of academic performance in order to be promoted.	0(0)	31(17.7)	141(80.6)	2(1.1)	1(.6)	1.84

54.9 per cent of these said "usually." Contrary to this, 10.9 per cent (19) said this is "rarely" or "never" a practice.

Item B produced similar responses. Over 89 per cent or 156 schools believed the statement "a student is promoted to the next subject level when all requirements of the present level are met" is "always" or "usually" a practice. Over 10 per cent said this is "rarely" or "never" a practice. Sixty per cent maintained that it is "usually" a practice.

Opinion was split regarding conditional promotion. Fifty-two per cent condoned this while 47.4% held that it is "rarely" or "never" a practice. Thirteen per cent of the total said "never."

Item D indicates much agreement. Seventy-six per cent of feeder schools indicated that there "always" or "usually" exists a practice of insisting all students pass all major subjects. Slightly more than 19 per cent said "always" while 56.6% said "usually." Forty-one elementary principals (23.4%) held this to be "rarely" or "never" a practice. Nine of the 41 principals stated never.

The lowest mean was recorded on Item E. It was indicated by 165 principals that "no student remains in any grade for more than two years." One hundred and sixteen said "always" a practice. Five per cent, or nine schools, "rarely" or "never" practice this.

The mean of the next statement is also relatively low. More than 76 per cent of the participants indicated this is always or usually a practice. More than 45 per cent said "usually" while 21 per cent revealed it is "rarely" or "never" a practice. One hundred and thirty-three principals expressed the opinion that it is "always" or "usually" a practice not to permit a student to spend fewer than three

years completing three grades. Seventy of 133 principals (40%) claimed this is always a practice. Similar to the previous policy statement, 21.2 per cent suggested it is "rarely" or "never" a practice.

Very few feeder schools permitted skipping. In fact, eight condoned this practice. Seventy-nine said "never," while an additional 87 felt it is "rarely" a practice.

Unlike response regarding skipping, the chronological age statement is characterized by much agreement. Sixteen per cent assert that consideration of chronological age is "always" a practice, while 57.7 per cent maintained "usually" a practice. A further 24 per cent hold the opinion it is "rarely" or "never" practised.

A high percentage (9.7) did not respond to Item J. The majority of responses (54.3%) maintained it is "rarely" or "never" the case. More than 33 per cent declared it is a usual practice. Less than 3 per cent said "always."

All principals responded when asked if the multi-factor approach to promotion or non-promotion decisions is used. Ninety-six per cent (171) contended that this is the practice of their schools. Ninety-five of 171 principals maintained it is "always" a practice while the remainder stated "usually." Four per cent claimed this is "rarely" a practice of their schools.

Few deemed "promotion regardless of how low academic achievement" as an acceptable practice. One hundred and fifty-seven advocated this is "rarely" or "never" a school practice. Eighty of these responded "rarely." However, seven principals felt that this practice is permissible.

Of all items, the final one appears most practised. Over 98 per cent stated that the student has to be able to demonstrate his level of academic performance in order to be promoted. One hundred and forty-one respondents claimed this is a usual practice of their school. Only three held the opinion that this is "rarely" or "never" the case.

#### Reasons for Non-Promotion

Table 9 depicts data received from feeder school response to the second part of the instrument. There was considerable consensus with regard to the first listed reason for non-promotion of borderline students. Over 95 per cent maintained if a student has not mastered the work of the grade this is a valid reason for non-promotion. Forty-six (26.3%) indicated "always" a valid reason, while 121 (69.1%) responded "usually" a valid reason. Less than 3 per cent deemed this "rarely" or "never" a valid reason.

One hundred and sixty-four respondents declared the statement, "he would not be able to handle the work of the next grade" as a valid consideration when making a promotion decision. Fifty-seven (32.6%) claimed this is "always" a reason. In addition 107 (61.1%) thought of this as "usually" a reason. Slightly more than 5 per cent "rarely" or "never" viewed this as a valid reason.

Poor attitude towards school is not a valid reason for non-promotion of borderline students. This is the view of a majority of principals (130). Ninety (51.4%) rarely deemed it a valid reason, while 40 (22.9%) never deemed it a consideration. Contrary to this statement, 43 principals (24.6%) thought it is "always" or "usually" a valid consideration.

TABLE 9

## DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS FOR NON-PROMOTION BY FEEDER SCHOOLS

Reason for Non-Promotion	RESPONSES					Mean
	No Response f. (%)	Always f. (%)	Usually f. (%)	Rarely f. (%)	Never f. (%)	
A. He has not mastered the work of the grade.	3(1.7)	46(26.3)	121(69.1)	4(2.3)	1(.6)	1.76
B. He would not be able to handle the work of the next grade.	2(1.1)	57(32.6)	107(61.1)	5(2.9)	4(2.3)	1.72
C. He has a poor attitude towards school.	2(1.1)	5(2.9)	38(21.7)	90(51.4)	40(22.9)	2.99
D. He is physically immature for his age.	5(2.9)	3(1.7)	24(13.7)	86(49.1)	57(32.6)	3.18
E. He habitually works far below his grade.	3(1.7)	35(20)	108(61.8)	21(12)	8(4.5)	2.01
F. He has very poor study habits.	2(1.1)	4(2.3)	77(44)	73(41.7)	19(10.9)	2.64
G. He needs to learn that effort is required for success in school work.	7(4)	9(5.1)	53(30.3)	69(39.4)	37(21.2)	2.85
H. His attendance record has been very poor.	2(1.1)	7(4)	53(30.3)	87(49.7)	26(14.9)	2.80
I. He has frequently been a trouble-maker in class.	2(1.1)	0(0)	5(2.9)	86(49.1)	82(46.9)	3.45
J. He is rather sickly and seems to lack vitality.	3(1.7)	0(0)	8(4.6)	83(47.4)	81(46.3)	3.42
K. His marks are borderline and he needs a firmer foundation before going on to more advanced work.	3(1.7)	10(5.7)	111(63.4)	45(25.7)	6(3.5)	2.72
L. He is a slow learner.	5(2.9)	7(4)	92(52.6)	47(26.9)	24(13.6)	2.56



TABLE 9 (Continued)

Reason for Non-Promotion	RESPONSES					Mean
	No Response f. (%)	Always f. (%)	Usually f. (%)	Rarely f. (%)	Never f. (%)	
M. His marks rank him near to the bottom of his class.	8(4.6)	1(.6)	48(27.4)	70(40)	53(30.3)	2.98
M. He is frequently inattentive during classroom lessons.	3(1.7)	1(.6)	48(27.4)	70(40)	53(30.3)	3.02
O. His social maturity is considered below average for his grade level.	3(1.8)	0(0)	44(25.1)	84(48)	44(25.1)	3.00

Physical immaturity does not receive extremely high consideration either. Only 27 of 175 respondents viewed this as "always" or "usually" a reason. However, 143 "rarely" or "never" viewed this as a reason in deciding non-promotion of borderlines. Fifty-seven principals said "never."

The statement, "he habitually works far below his grade," is very often a reason. Over 81 per cent of respondents believed this to be the case. However, 16.5 per cent disagreed. They said it is "rarely" or "never" a valid reason. One hundred and eight maintained this is "usually" a reason.

Dissension regarding study habits is apparent among feeder schools. Eighty-one principals said it is a consideration while 92 stated the opposite. Seventy-seven of this 81 claimed it is "usually" considered, while 73 of 92 asserted "rarely."

Principals placed less emphasis on the statement, "he needs to learn that effort is required. . . ." Yet there was considerable disagreement here. More than 35 per cent viewed this as a valid reason. Slightly more than 61 per cent refuted this by saying "rarely" or "never." Approximately 40 per cent maintained "rarely" while 21.2 per cent advocated "never."

Many schools consider a poor attendance record as a reason. More than 34 per cent believed it is "always" or "usually" a consideration, nearly 50 per cent rarely considered it, and 14.9 per cent "never" utilized it.

The next item had the highest mean. Only five (2.9%) viewed negative class behaviour when deciding promotional status of borderline students. Ninety-six per cent "rarely" or "never" considered this.

reason. "Rarely" was the response of 49.1 per cent. Nearly 47 per cent. stated "never." "He is rather sickly and seems to lack vitality" also received a very low rating. Only eight "usually" considered this. On the other hand, 83 declared "rarely" and 81 schools responded "never" a valid reason.

Item K is considered valid by many principals. One hundred and twenty-one advocated this is "always" or "usually" the case. One hundred and eleven of these claimed "usually" a valid reason. Opposite to this, 51 principals answered "rarely" or "never" the case.

A wider dispersion of response was recorded on the "he is a slow learner" statement. Ninety-nine claim it to be a valid consideration while 71 indicated it is not. Of these, 92 responded "usually," and "rarely" was the opinion of 47. An additional 28 principals emphasized "never."

Forty-nine (28%) elementary principals held the opinion that a borderline student's academic standing in relation to his class is a valid reason for non-promotion. One of 49 responded "always." The remaining 48 claimed "usually." More than 70 per cent (133) held the view that this is "rarely" or "never" the case. "Rarely" was the response of 70 principals, while 53 responded "never."

Similar response was recorded for Item N. More than 70 per cent held the view that inattentiveness during classroom lessons is not a factor when determining promotional status of borderline students. In fact, 30.3 per cent stated this is "never" a reason for non-promotion. More than 27 per cent expressed that it "usually" is a consideration.

Social maturity was also given a low priority by many principals. About one-quarter considered social maturity when it is below

par. Half indicated this is "rarely" a reason, while the remaining quarter said this is "never" a consideration.

#### Administrative Regulations

As illustrated by Table 10, four (2.3%) asserted that their school has a generally accepted practice or tradition specifying the percentage promoted. This formed only a small percentage, since more than 94 per cent (165) claimed no such practice existed.

Differences were not as extreme when schools were asked if they permit conditional promotion. Slightly more than 41 per cent permitted conditional promotion. At the same time, 57.2 per cent did not. In explaining conditional, more disagreement is apparent. Over 9 per cent did not explain conditional. Of those who responded, 19 described it as "showing improvement early in next term." Another 13 referred to it as promotion with remedial placement. Satisfactory summer school is what nine principals depicted it to be. Principals of seven schools believed conditional to mean that a student must do well in the next grade. If not, the student will have to repeat that grade.

Nearly 18 per cent of responding schools permit promotion during the year. Eighty per cent do not allow this practice in their schools. A number of explanations was given. Even though "if your answer is 'yes' please explain" was not applicable to 140, 10 did give comment. Eight per cent indicated it is permitted but rarely practised. More than 6 per cent said their schools have promotions to different levels within grades. "Exceptional children are permitted to advance at their own pace" was the reply of an additional 4.6 per cent. Slightly more than 1 per cent permit subject promotion to occur in their schools.

TABLE 10

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS CONCERNING  
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS, BY FEEDER SCHOOLS

A. Does your school have a generally accepted practice or tradition specifying the percentage of students who should be promoted?

	f. (%)
No response	6(3.4)
Yes	4(2.3)
No	165(94.3)

B. Does your school permit "conditional" promotion at the end of June?

	f. (%)
No response	3(1.7)
Yes	72(41.1)
No	100(57.2)

If your answer is "yes" please explain what is meant by the term "conditional".

	f. (%)
Not applicable	100(57.1)
No response	16(9.2)
Do satisfactory work at summer school	9(5.1)
Show improvement early in next term	19(10.9)
Write supplementary exams	2(1.1)
Do well in next grade, if not the student will have to repeat that grade	7(4)
Promoted without a diploma	3(1.7)
Promoted but placed in remedial classes	13(7.5)
All borderline students are promoted	6(3.4)

C. Does your school permit promotion during the year (other than in June)?

	f. (%)
No response	4(2.3)
Yes	31(17.7)
No	140(80)

TABLE 10 (Continued)

## C. If your answer is "yes" please explain.

	f. (%)
No response	9(5.1)
Permitted but rarely practiced	14(8)
Not applicable	130(74.3)
Exceptional children are permitted to advance at their own pace	8(4.6)
Students may be promoted in various subjects throughout the year	2(1.1)
Students are promoted to different levels within grades	12(6.9)

## D. By whom is the promotion or non-promotion of individual students discussed?

	f. (%)
Teacher	2(1.1)
Teacher and principal	57(32.6)
Teacher, principal and parents	3(1.7)
Staff	66(37.7)
Staff and parents	29(16.6)
Staff and board personnel	14(8)
Staff, parents and students	1(.6)
No response	3(1.7)

## E. Who makes the final decision about the promotion or non-promotion of individual students?

	f. (%)
Teacher	11(6.3)
Teacher and principal	69(39.4)
Principal	86(49.1)
Teacher, principal and parents	3(1.7)
Staff	4(2.3)
Superintendent	0(0)
Promotion Committee	0(0)
No response	2(1.2)



Feeder schools answered in a number of ways when asked with whom promotion of students is discussed. More than 37 per cent responded staff. Almost another 25 per cent indirectly involved staff. From this 25 per cent, 16 per cent indicated staff and parents, 8 per cent involved staff and board personnel, while 0.6 per cent included staff, parents and students. More than 32 per cent of principals maintained discussion results between the teacher and principal. "Teacher" was the response of 1.1 per cent.

Almost half of the respondents stated the principal has final authority in this matter. More than 39 per cent indicated the decision is left to the teacher and principal. Staff makes the final decision according to 2.3 per cent. More than 6 per cent of principals indicated that the teacher makes the final decision.

#### Question 4

What differences exist between perceptions of school board, central/junior high and feeder school promotion policies?

The Chi-square test of significance was used to answer this question. Five items were not tested because the number of responses was below acceptable standard for more than 20 per cent of the cells (Ferguson, 1976). This also posed a problem in some of the completed analyses. In those cases, several response cells were collapsed to form one cell. For example, "always" and "usually" may have been combined to form "always or usually." Analyses having six or two degrees of freedom do not have collapsed cells; whereas those with four do. Despite the fact that 30 Chi-square analyses were performed, only items with significant differences are explained in detail.

As shown by Table 11, groups (boards, central/junior and associated feeder schools) showed statistically significant differences on 12 of 30 analyzed items. Six significant differences occurred in question one of the instrument, question two had four, while two significant differences occurred in the third question.

TABLE 11  
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS FOR RESPONSES OF GROUPS  
BY SELECTED QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

Item	$\chi^2$	df
<u>1. Promotion Practices</u>		
A. Minimum standards of academic achievement are specified for each grade level and students must meet these standards in order to be promoted.	11.7066*	4
B. A student is promoted to the next higher subject level when all academic requirements of the present level are achieved.	4.67337	4
C. Students whose academic achievement is borderline are conditionally promoted to the next grade.	8.8275	6
D. Students are not promoted if their marks are below the passing standard in any one of the major subjects (e.g., Math., English, Science).	8.3184	6
E. No student remains in any grade for more than two years.	22.04112***	4
F. No student spends more than three years completing two consecutive grades.	15.24576*	6
G. No student is permitted to spend less than three years completing three grades.	9.30488	6
H. Skipping (e.g., omitting the work of a grade) is permitted.	13.00061*	4

TABLE 11. (Continued)

Item	$\chi^2$	df
I. Chronological age is a factor in determining promotion.	14.42712*	6
J. Students are permitted to get out of their social group through either acceleration or retardation.	8.7331	6
K. The multi-factor approach to promotion or non-promotion decisions is used (chronological age, social maturity, academic achievement, emotional status, physical maturity, etc.).	14.44968**	4
L. A student is promoted regardless of how low his level of success in academic subjects.	5.72792	4
M. The student has to be able to demonstrate his level of academic performance in order to be promoted.	3.60112	4
2. <u>Reasons for Non-Promotion</u>		
A. He has not mastered the work of the grade.	10.9498*	4
B. He would not be able to handle the work of the next grade.	1.4537	4
C. He has a poor attitude towards school.	7.13447	4
D. He is physically immature for his age.	4.20589	4
E. He habitually works far below his grade.	7.50555	6
F. He has very poor study habits.	10.1619*	4

TABLE 11 (Continued)

Item	$\chi^2$	df
G. He needs to learn that effort is required for success in school work.	8.32206	4
H. His attendance record has been very poor.	4.02582	
I. He has frequently been a trouble-maker in class.	10.88707*	4
J. He is rather sickly and seems to lack vitality.	5.86602	4
K. His marks are borderline and he needs a firmer foundation before going on to more advanced work.	6.30477	6
L. He is a slow learner.	8.36162	4
M. His marks rank him near to the bottom of his class.	2.85945	4
N. He is frequently inattentive during classroom lessons.	18.56146***	4
O. His social maturity is considered below average for his grade level.	6.88859	4
<u>3. Administrative Regulations</u>		
A. Does your board/school have a generally accepted practice or tradition specifying the percentage of students who should be promoted?	1.58666	2
B. Does your board/school permit "conditional" promotion at the end of June?	13.30841**	2
C. Does your board/school permit promotion during the year (other than in June)?	8.31319*	2

\* .05 level;

\*\* .01 level;

\*\*\* .001 level.

### Minimum Standards of Achievement

When group response was measured by the statement, "minimum standards of academic achievement are specified for each grade level and students must meet these in order to be promoted," it was found that response widely varied (Table 12):

TABLE 12  
GROUP RESPONSE TO "MINIMUM STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT"

Group	Always a Practice f.(%)	Usually a Practice f.(%)	Rarely or Never a Practice f.(%)
Board	10(35)	18(62)	1(3)
Central/Junior	47(48)	49(50)	2(2)
Feeder	58(34)	96(56)	19(10)
Total	115(38)	163(54)	22(8)

Chi-square = 11.7066 (4 d.f.), .05 significance level.

Group response was found to be statistically significant at the .05 level. The percentage figures indicate some similarity of response. Similar numbers of board officials and feeder school principals responded "always." Board personnel were also similar to central/junior high principals when indicating "rarely or never." There was less group similarity regarding "usually a practice."

### Remaining in Grade

Group differences (boards, central/junior high school and elementary feeder school) were found to be significantly different at the .001 level for the statement, "no student remains in any grade for more than two years." Table 13 depicts the large number of feeder schools who responded "always a practice."

TABLE 13

GROUP RESPONSE TO "NO STUDENT REMAINS IN THE SAME  
GRADE FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS"

Group	Always a Practice	Usually a Practice	Rarely or Never a Practice
	f.(%)	f.(%)	f.(%)
Board	13(45)	13(45)	3(10)
Central/Junior	37(38)	50(52)	10(10)
Feeder	116(67)	49(28)	9(5)
Total	166(55)	112(37)	22(8)

Chi-square = 22.04112 (4 d.f.), .001 significance level.

Response to "rarely or never a practice" shows slight agreement.

#### Completing Two Consecutive Grades

Table 14 illustrates areas of difference among groups. Percentage figures indicate most differences occur among central/junior high and feeder school principal responses. Responses of school board officials tended to be more similar to feeder school principals even though there were discrepancies.

TABLE 14

GROUP RESPONSE TO "NO STUDENT SPENDS MORE THAN  
THREE YEARS COMPLETING TWO CONSECUTIVE GRADES"

Group	Always a Practice	Usually a Practice	Rarely a Practice	Never a Practice
	f.(%)	f.(%)	f.(%)	f.(%)
Board	5(17)	15(52)	5(17)	4(14)
Central/Junior	17(17)	39(41)	21(22)	19(20)
Feeder	54(32)	80(47)	22(13)	14(8)
Total	76(25)	134(45)	48(16)	38(13)

Chi-square = 15.24576 (6 d.f.), .05 significance level.



### Skipping Work of a Grade

The item "skipping (e.g., omitting the work of the grade) is permitted" also elicited significant differences (Table 15). Board and feeder school respondents answered this statement in an almost identical fashion. Central/junior high principals differed most. A large percentage of these indicated skipping work of a grade is "rarely or never" practised.

TABLE 15  
GROUP RESPONSE TO "SKIPPING WORK OF A GRADE"

Group	Always a Practice f.(%)	Usually a Practice f.(%)	Rarely or Never a Practice f.(%)
Board	1(3)	15(52)	13(45)
Central/Junior	3(3)	29(30)	66(67)
Feeder	8(5)	87(50)	79(46)
Total	12(4)	131(44)	158(52)

Chi-square = 13.00061 (4 d.f.), .05 significance level.

### Chronological Age

Similar to "skipping," the statement "chronological age is a factor in determining promotion" produced significant differences among boards, central/junior high and feeder schools. A Chi-square value of 14.42712 was obtained which indicated significance at the .05 level. Table 16 displays the appropriate data. The frequencies and percentages indicated few similar responses. The figures showed central/junior high respondents considered chronological age less than feeder school principals. Board participants considered it more than central/junior high principals but less than feeder school respondents.

TABLE 16  
GROUP RESPONSE TO "CHRONOLOGICAL AGE"

Group	Always a Practice	Usually a Practice	Rarely a Practice	Never a Practice
	f.(%)	f.(%)	f.(%)	f.(%)
Board	0(0)	20(69)	9(30)	0(0)
Central/Junior	8(8)	51(52)	35(36)	4(4)
Feeder	28(16)	101(58)	38(22)	4(4)
Total	36(12)	172(58)	82(28)	8(2)

Chi-square = 14.42712 (6 d.f.), .05 significance level.

#### Multi-Factor Approach

Table 17 shows the frequency of response of groups for each category, indicating the degree to which promotion statements are practised. The Chi-square value indicates significance at the .01 level. Most differences occurred between central/junior high and feeder school groups. This is especially true when the "rarely or never" category is examined. "Always a practice" also produced large differences for these groups. Even though respondents of school boards differed from both groups they differed most with feeder school principals.

TABLE 17  
GROUP RESPONSE TO "MULTI-FACTOR APPROACH"

Group	Always a Practice	Usually a Practice	Rarely or Never a Practice
	f.(%)	f.(%)	f.(%)
Board	12(43)	12(43)	4(14)
Central/Junior	34(35)	52(53)	12(12)
Feeder	95(54)	73(42)	7(4)
Total	141(47)	137(46)	23(7)

Chi-square = 14.44968 (4 d.f.), .01 significance level.

### Mastered Work of Grade

When groups were tested for differences on the statement, "he has not mastered the work of the grade," it was observed that consideration of this as a valid reason for non-promotion significantly differed among groups. The Chi-square value indicates differences at the .05 level (Table 18). There was close similarity of response among board and feeder school respondents. In fact, 97 per cent of these groups indicated if a student "has not mastered work of the grade" it is always or usually a valid reason for non-promotion. For this item, central/junior high response was generally different than the other groups. Ninety-nine per cent of central/junior high principals maintained a student must master work of the grade to be promoted, but 46 per cent said this is "always" the case.

TABLE 18

#### GROUP RESPONSE TO "HAS NOT MASTERED WORK OF THE GRADE"

Group	Always a Valid Reason f.(%)	Usually a Valid Reason f.(%)	Rarely or Never a Valid Reason f.(%)
Board	9(31)	19(66)	1(3)
Central/Junior	45(46)	52(53)	1(1)
Feeder	46(27)	121(70)	5(3)
Total	100(33)	192(64)	7(2)

Chi-square = 10.9498 (4 d.f.), .05 significance level.

### Poor Study Habits

Response concerning validity of the reason "he has very poor study habits" differed significantly. The difference was at the .05 level in view of a Chi-square value of 10.16191 (Table 19). Board

respondents were the dissenting group on this particular item. A much smaller percentage (24%) of these felt "poor study habits" was a factor in determining promotion. Contrary to this, central/junior high and feeder school principals responded 45 per cent and 47 per cent, respectively. Furthermore, a much higher percentage of board officials (31%) claimed this to be never a valid reason. Even though response of board personnel differed with central/junior high and feeder school principals, these latter two groups responded similarly.

TABLE 19  
GROUP RESPONSE TO "POOR STUDY HABITS"

Group	Always or Usually a Valid Reason	Rarely a Valid Reason	Never a Valid Reason
	f.(%)	f.(%)	f.(%)
Board	7(24)	13(45)	9(31)
Central/Junior	44(45)	40(41)	14(14)
Feeder	81(47)	73(42)	19(11)
Total	132(44)	126(42)	142(14)

Chi-square = 10.1619 (4 d.f.), .05 significance level.

#### Trouble-Maker In Class

Table 20 displays response to the reason for non-promotion "he has frequently been a trouble-maker in class." Response shows significant differences at the .05 level. There were instances where all three groups disagreed. Even though central/junior high respondents differed from feeder school and board participants, they differed most with boards. Compared with board respondents, 9 per cent more central/junior high principals stated "being a trouble-maker in class" is "always or usually a valid reason" for non-promotion. When responses of the two

groups to "rarely a valid reason" were compared, 14 per cent more of board officials responded rarely. Feeder school principals also tended to differ more with board respondents than central/junior high principals.

TABLE 20  
GROUP RESPONSE TO "TROUBLE-MAKER IN CLASS"

Group	Always or Usually a Valid Reason	Rarely a Valid Reason	Never a Valid Reason
	f. (%)	f. (%)	f. (%)
Board	1(3)	12(41)	16(56)
Central/Junior	12(12)	45(46)	41(42)
Feeder	5(3)	86(50)	82(47)
Total	18(6)	143(48)	139(46)

Chi-square = 10.88707 (4.d.f.), .05 significance level.

#### Inattentiveness During Lessons

Differences in response to the statement, "he is frequently inattentive during classroom lessons," were found to be significant at the .001 confidence level. Table 21 presents the data. Basically there was no consistency of response among the groups for this statement. Central/junior high principal response differed immensely with responses of principals from feeder schools. However, board response differences were even more extreme when compared to the other two groups.



TABLE 21  
GROUP RESPONSE TO "INATTENTIVENESS DURING LESSONS"

Group	Always or Usually a Valid Reason	Rarely a Valid Reason	Never a Valid Reason
	f. (%)	f. (%)	f. (%)
Board	2(7)	10(35)	17(58)
Central/Junior	16(17)	54(50)	26(27)
Feeder	49(29)	70(41)	53(30)
Total	67(23)	134(45)	96(32)

Chi-square = 18.56146 (4 d.f.), .001 significance level.

#### Conditional Promotion

Response to "does your board/school permit conditional promotion at the end of June?" also varied significantly. Table 22 illustrates response differences. A Chi-square of 13.30841 was obtained, meaning results are significant at the .001 level. Similar to the last item board personnel responses produced most differences. A much larger majority of these respondents indicated conditional promotion is permitted. Furthermore, there was a 13 per cent difference between central/junior high and feeder school response.

TABLE 22  
GROUP RESPONSES TO CONDITIONAL PROMOTION

Group	Yes	No
	f. (%)	f. (%)
Board	22(76)	7(24)
Central/Junior	54(55)	44(45)
Feeder	72(42)	100(58)
Total	148(49)	151(50)

Chi-square = 13.30841 2 (d.f.), .001 significance level.



### Promotion During Year

Table 23 depicts level response to the question, "does your board/school permit promotion during the year (other than in June)?" Responses are significant at the .05 level. Response of school principals was almost identical: a one per cent difference. When school principals were compared with board respondents larger differences were evident. Approximately 20 per cent more of board officials maintained promotion during the year other than in June is permitted.

TABLE 23  
GROUP RESPONSE TO "PROMOTION DURING YEAR"

Group	Yes	No
	f.(%)	f.(%)
Board	12(41)	17(59)
Central/Junior	19(19)	79(81)
Feeder	31(18)	140(82)
Total	62(21)	236(79)

Chi-square = 8.31319 (2 d.f.), .05 significance level.

### Question 5

Is there a relationship between perceptions of central/junior high school and associated feeder school student promotion policies?

In order to answer this question, Pearson Product Moment correlations were performed between central/junior high schools and their associated feeder schools for the first 28 questionnaire items. Although 175 feeder schools responded, only 148 correlations were performed because central/junior high schools of the other 27 feeder schools did not respond. Figure 5 depicts these results, using a

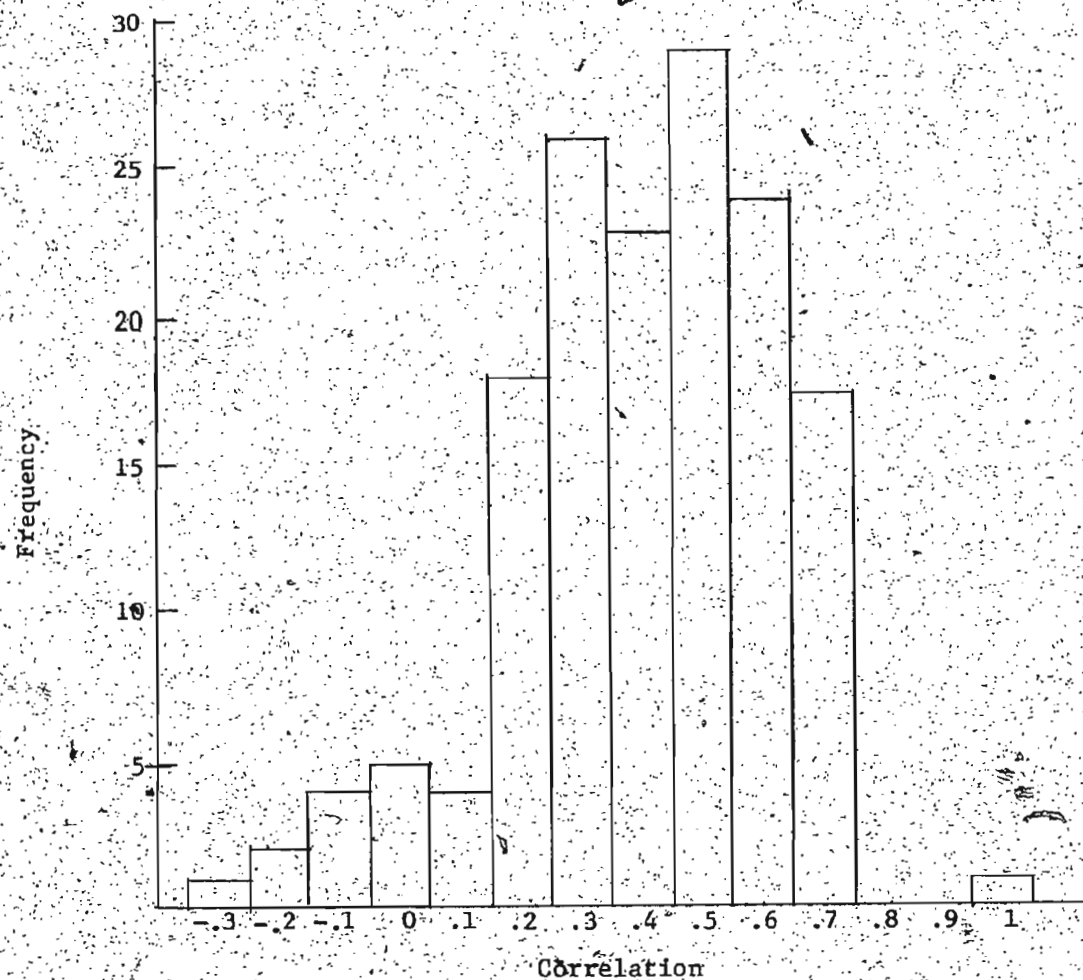


Figure 5. Correlations of Feeder and Central/Junior High School Regarding The First Twenty Eight Questionnaire Items.

histogram.

The mean correlation was  $+0.448$  while the median was  $+0.446$ . Stated differently, half of the correlations were larger than  $+0.446$  and the other half were smaller. The histogram indicates that many correlations were near the  $+0.446$  mark. The majority of responses (76) were in the  $+0.40$  to  $+0.60$  range. However, 44 other feeder schools had a correlation of  $+0.20$  to  $+0.30$  with their associated central/junior high. A further 16 had correlations of  $+0.10$  or less. In contrast to this, 12 had correlations of  $+0.70$  or more. Of these, one feeder school and its central/junior high had a perfect correlation  $+1.0$ .

Figure 6 presents the average correlation of each board so they may be viewed in depth. To obtain averages, correlations were transformed to Z-scores. The mean Z-score was found and then converted to raw correlation scores. One board had a negative correlation, while remaining boards had correlations in excess of  $+0.30$ . The mean correlation was  $+0.468$  and the median,  $+0.478$ . Correlations of  $+0.30$  were obtained by 12 boards, while six had  $+0.40$  correlations. A result of  $+0.50$  was obtained by 10 boards. The remaining three had correlations of  $+0.6$  or  $+0.7$ .

To further analyze these correlations, they were subdivided into three equal groups. These groups consisted of low, medium and high correlations. Comparisons were then made between groups of high and low correlation. Table 24 presents the number of schools that boards had in high and low groups. Boards are listed by a code number so anonymity may be maintained. Twenty boards had schools that were in the low groups, while 21 had schools in the high group. Fourteen boards had schools in the high and low group.

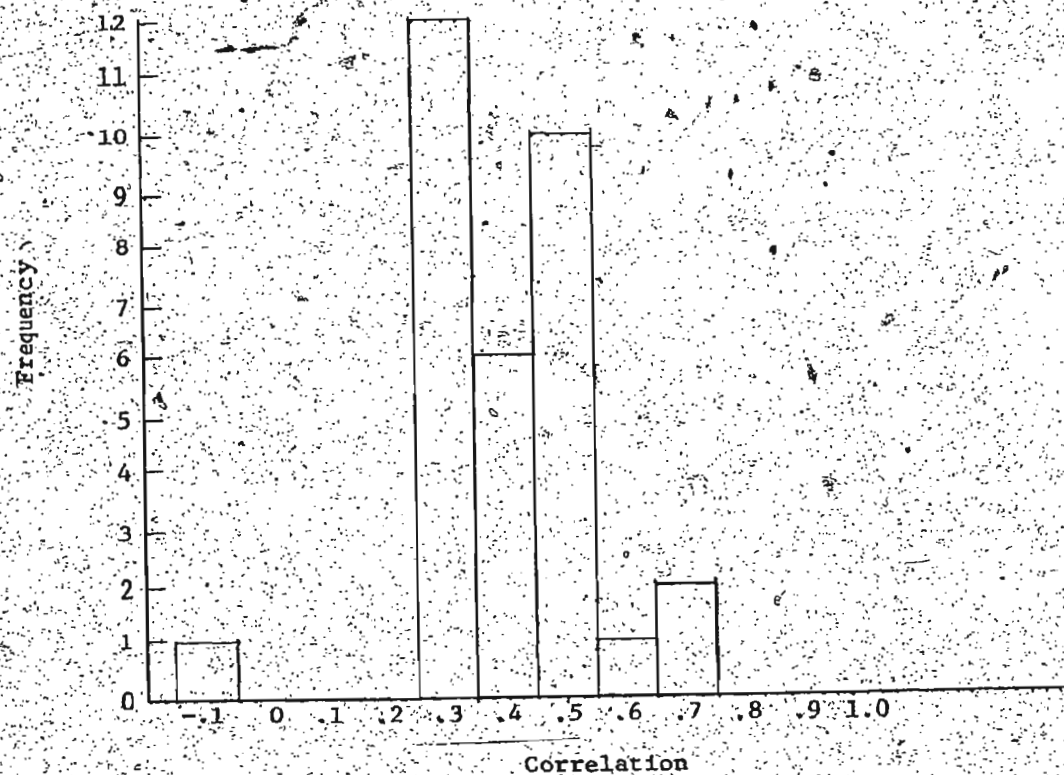


Figure 6. Average Correlation of Feeder and Central High School for Boards.

TABLE 24

## CENTRAL/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CORRELATIONS\* IN LOW AND HIGH GROUPS BY BOARD

Low Correlations			High Correlations		
Board Number	Number of Correlations in Low Group	Percentage of Total Correlations Performed	Board Number	Number of Correlations in High Group	Percentage of Total Correlations Performed*
1	0	0	1	2	66.6
2	1	20	2	1	20
3	0	0	3	0	0
4	3	18.8	4	6	37.5
5	1	50	5	0	0
6	2	40	6	2	50
7	1	16.7	7	4	66.6
8	0	0	8	0	0
9	0	0	9	0	0
10	2	28.6	10	3	42.9
11	6	37.5	11	4	25
12	0	0	12	1	100
13	1	100	13	0	0
14	0	0	14	1	50
15	4	44.4	15	4	44.4
16	3	50	16	1	16.7
17	0	0	17	1	100
18	1	50	18	1	50
19	1	100	19	0	0
20	0	0	20	0	0
21	1	33.3	21	0	0
22	0	0	22	0	0
23	1	20	23	3	60
24	0	0	24	1	25
25	0	0	25	1	100
26	3	60	26	1	20
27	4	100	27	0	0
28	0	0	28	0	0
29	4	44.4	29	2	11.1
30	0	0	30	1	100
31	4	57	31	2	28.6
32	2	66.7	32	0	0
33	0	0	33	0	0
34	3	15.8	34	7	36.8
35	0	0	35	0	0

\*Correlations. Low: -.238 to +.373. High: +.539 to +1.0.



Table 25 illustrates the number of central/junior high schools that correlated lowly or highly with more than one of its feeder schools. The first two digits of central/junior high school code numbers also indicate board code numbers. For example, board 11 has three central/junior high schools that correlate lowly with more than one of its feeder schools. This board also has one central/junior high school that correlates highly with more than one of its feeder schools.

TABLE 25

CENTRAL/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS HAVING LOW OR HIGH CORRELATIONS\* WITH MORE THAN ONE OF THEIR FEEDER SCHOOLS

Low Group		High Group	
Central/Junior High School Number	Number and (percentage) of feeder schools that correlate lowly	Central/Junior High School Number	Number and (percentage) of feeder schools that correlate highly
043	2(50)	011	2(50)
064	2(66)	041	4(57.1)
112	2(66)	045	2(66.6)
113	2(66)	063	2(100)
115	2(40)	074	3(100)
264	2(100)	115	2(40)
271	3(100)	341	3(75)
291	4(66.6)	343	2(33.3)
316	2(66.6)		
342	2(33.3)		

\*Correlations. Low:  $-.23$  to  $+.373$ . High:  $+.539$  to  $+1.0$ .

Central/junior high schools of eight different boards were located in the low groups. On the other hand, schools of six different boards were found in the high group. Four boards had central/junior high schools located in the high and low group. In view of the fact that this study included 35 boards, it is evident that 25 boards did not have central/junior high schools that correlated lowly or highly with more than one of their feeder schools.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of the problem, the methodology employed and the findings emanating from the data. General conclusions are presented and recommendations are proposed for further study and action.

#### Summary

##### The Problem

This study was designed to determine what types of student promotion policies currently exist among school boards, central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools. It also attempted to ascertain what differences in student promotion policy exist between school boards, central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools. An effort was also made to discover the extent of student promotion policy differences prevalent among central/junior high schools and their associated feeder schools.

##### Instrumentation and Methodology

This study is based on data gathered by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire is an adapted version of one used by Ellis and Gill in a 1964 Toronto student promotion study. The questionnaire was examined by all Educational Administration professors in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. It was

also examined by all full-time graduate students within this department. As a result of this process, minor changes were made. A pilot study, in the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board was then undertaken. No additional changes were made as a result of this study. The adjusted questionnaire used in collecting data is presented in Appendix A.

Questionnaires were mailed to all school boards (35), central/junior high schools (114) and their associated feeder schools (232). Four weeks after the questionnaire was distributed, a follow-up letter was issued to those who had not responded. An overall response rate of 80 per cent was obtained.

#### Findings Related to Question 1

Board response was typified by much agreement even though this response was divided on particular questionnaire items. Agreement of response on items concerning minimum standards of achievement, completion of academic requirements, passing major subjects, continuous promotion and student's ability to demonstrate his level of performance indicate board emphasis on academic achievement as a criteria for promotion. However, response to "the multi-factor approach to promotion" strongly indicated factors other than academic achievement were also considered. Board response to Section One of the instrument indicated that most board personnel follow the practice of not allowing a student to remain in the same grade for more than two years. Furthermore, many board officials do not permit conditional promotion.

Response was sharply divided on statements dealing with conditional promotion and students spending less than three years completing three grades. Statements concerning students spending more

than three years completing two consecutive grades, chronological age and importance of social group also produced disagreement.

Section Two did not show as much agreement as Section One. Seven statements depicted disagreement. These (E,F,G,H,K,L, and O) indicated that board officials disagreed on the following reasons for non-promotion: habitually working below grade level; poor study habits; effort and attendance record; social immaturity; lack of ability to handle work of next grade; and being a slow learner. Poor attitude toward school, physical immaturity, poor study habits, being a trouble-maker in class, poor health, progress in relation to the class, and classroom inattentiveness, were "rarely" or "never" valid reasons for non-promotion.

Definition of the term "conditional promotion" varied among those who permit its usage. The majority defined it as "student must show improvement early in next term." Response was also divided concerning promotion during the year. Most boards maintain that promotion is discussed with the staff and the student's teacher, but the principal has ultimate say.

#### Findings Related to Question 2

Response to statements concerning minimum standards of achievement, completion of academic requirements, passing major subjects, multi-factor approach to promotion, continuous promotion, and student ability to demonstrate his level of academic performance, displays the large emphasis principals of central/junior high schools place on academic achievement. However, response to the multi-factor approach to promotion (K) indicates other factors are also considered. In a large majority of central/junior high schools, no student remains in

any grade for more than two years; no student is permitted to spend less than three years completing three grades; and skipping work of a grade is not permitted.

Central/junior high principals were divided on items concerning conditional promotion, chronological age and importance of the social group (B, I and J). Almost half permit conditional promotion; consider chronological age; and do not permit students to get out of their social group. The statements, "no student spends more than three consecutive years completing two consecutive grades" and "no student is permitted to spend less than three years completing three grades" also showed disagreement.

In comparison to central/junior high response to Section One, Section Two of the instrument showed more disagreement. Statements producing disagreement regarded attitude towards school work and study habits, effort, attendance record, needing a firmer foundation before advancing to the next grade, and marks in relation to the class (C, E, F, G, H, K and L). The remaining items showed relative agreement. Central/junior high school principals responded "rarely" or "never" reasons for non-promotion to statements dealing with physical and social immaturity, inattentiveness during classroom lessons, results in relation to the class, classroom behaviour and physical health.

#### Findings Related to Question 3

Feeder schools demonstrated considerable agreement when responding to the first section of the instrument. Much emphasis was placed on the importance of academic achievement. However, other factors, as indicated by response to the statement concerning the multi-factor approach to promotion (K), received extremely high

consideration. Most feeder schools indicated academic achievement was usually a consideration. The majority of feeder schools stated no student remains in any grade for more than two years, spends more than three years completing two consecutive grades, and is permitted to spend less than three years completing three grades. Many maintain skipping is not permitted and that it is not a major factor in determining promotion. Schools were divided on the item regarding conditional promotion. Slightly more than half permit the practice, while the remainder do not.

Less agreement was prevalent in the second section of the instrument. Considerable division of response occurred on items concerning the following reasons for non-promotion: poor study habits, poor effort, poor attendance records, needing a firmer foundation before moving on to more advanced work, being a slow learner, slow progress in relation to the class, inattentiveness during classroom lessons and social immaturity. A large percentage agree that academic achievement is an important reason for non-promotion. Feeder schools also agreed that poor attitude towards school, physical immaturity, frequently being a trouble-maker in class and lacking vitality were not valid reasons in deciding non-promotion of borderline students.

More than 57 per cent of feeder schools do not permit conditional promotion. Of those who do, the majority defined it as doing well early in the next grade. Very few schools permit promotion during the year. When asked with whom is promotion discussed, 38 per cent responded "staff." An additional 33 per cent indicated teacher and principal. Slightly more than 16 per cent involved parents in the discussion. Nearly 49 per cent claimed principals make the final

decision about promotion while another 39 per cent responded principal and teacher.

#### Findings Related to Question 4

Chi-square calculations were performed to determine if groups (boards, central/junior high and associated feeder schools) significantly differed on selected questionnaire items. It was found that on Section One of the instrument groups differed on items pertaining to minimum standards of achievement, the multi-factor approach, skipping, repeating grades for the second time, and chronological age (A, E, F, H, I and K). Response to "minimum standards of achievement" and "students remaining in a grade for more than two years" indicated central/junior high principals and board superintendents were similar while feeder school principals differed. Feeder school principals did not consider minimum standards of achievement as much as the other two groups. These principals also indicated they practice "no student remains in any grade for more than two years."

Similarity of response among groups to "no student is permitted to spend more than three consecutive years completing two consecutive grades" was minimum. Feeder school principals practised this more than the other groups. Central/junior high school respondents practised it the least. Central/junior high school principals permit less skipping of material than the remaining groups. Feeder school and board respondents indicated they widely practice this. Feeder schools consider chronological age more than any other group. The statement concerning "multi-factor approach to promotion" revealed immense differences. Feeder school principals practice this the most and central/junior high respondents the least. School board officials



responded moderately.

Items concerning "mastering the work of the grade," "study habits" and "classroom behaviour" showed group differences in Section Two of the instrument. Feeder school and board officials consider mastery level and classroom behaviour less than central/junior high school respondents.

Group differences were significant on two questionnaire items dealing with administrative regulations. A large percentage of board respondents indicate conditional promotion at the end of June. However, a much smaller percentage of central/junior high and feeder school principals indicated this to be the case. Similarity of response occurred among central/junior high and feeder school principals regarding promotion during the year. Despite this, response was much different from that of board participants.

#### Findings Related to Question 5

Questionnaire responses for central/junior high schools were paired with responses of each associated feeder school. A correlation coefficient was obtained for each case. Then all correlation coefficients were converted to Z-transformation scores so that the mean correlation could be found.

To further analyze these correlations, they were divided into three equal groups: low, medium and high correlations. It could not be determined from this data if particular characteristics such as geographical location and size of schools and boards were inherent to schools found in high, medium and low correlation groups. Fourteen boards had schools in high and low groups. This was compounded by the fact that school boards had varying numbers of correlations included.

in the study.

The relatively high mean correlation (+.448) suggests there is considerable agreement among central/junior high and associated feeder schools. This figure does not indicate the nature of agreement, merely that the response between groups was similar.

Mean correlations for schools within each board were also calculated. This data was computed due to the uneven distribution of schools throughout boards. For example, one board may have 18 of its schools included in the study, while another has two. This statistic allows for district and provincial analysis.

Boards had a mean correlation of +.468 and a median of +.478. The range was computed to be -.10 to +.70. Results were found to be similar to overall central/junior high and associated feeder school correlations.

### Conclusions

The following may be listed as conclusions to this study:

(1) Academic achievement is the essential component of student promotion policies in Newfoundland school boards, central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools. Items concerning the importance of academic achievement produced most consensus. In fact, the degree to which academic achievement was considered varied only slightly for each group.

Three broad promotion philosophies were outlined in the literature review. It is evident that continuous promotion is non-existent in Newfoundland. Academic standards and continuous progress are the accepted rule. Academic achievement is the basis for these even

though continuous progress does entertain factors other than academic achievement. Due to Newfoundland's grade level education structure, it is difficult to fully incorporate continuous progress. Therefore, this type of policy may have stronger academic overtones in the Newfoundland school system other than the literature would normally suggest. The literature indicates academic achievement is one of many factors but the school structure may cause it to be the essential factor. This could explain why schools strongly consider academic achievement and at the same time consider other factors.

(2) Board officials were less likely to respond "always" or "never" to instrument items. Items concerning reasons for non-promotion of borderline students were given minimum consideration. This group also perceived they had some involvement in deciding promotional status of students.

This form of board response could indicate three things. The literature review presented Dror's (1970) concept of "mega" and "meta" policies. Due to the apparent absence of megapolicy at the Department of Education level, it is possible that school boards assume responsibility for megapolicies. By their very nature, megapolicies serve as a guide for discreet policies and are not meant to be definite. Therefore, it would be difficult for boards to have definite responses.

Board response could also indicate the lack of awareness of actual school practices, thus leading to "usually" or "rarely" responses. An alternative explanation is that school boards specifically allow flexibility within schools because exceptional circumstances might require flexibility. Boards may have perceived involvement in the final promotion decision because legally it is their duty to do so (Schools Act 13:5).

(3) Central/junior high principals tended to respond more definitely, using "always" and "never" frequently. In central/junior high schools staff had major input in deciding promotion of students.

There are several possible explanations for a more definite response. One might be the presence of more definite student behavioural objectives. It was concluded from the theoretical framework that actual student outcomes should form the basis of promotion decisions--that is, when they are measured against intended outcomes. Central/junior high schools may determine intended goals in view of course objectives and student achievement, where student achievement can be assessed using testing, measurement and evaluation. The result might be a more defined promotion policy.

Another explanation may be derived from Davies and Brickell's (1969) model. They identify "product report" as a key element of policy implementation. The product report indicates policy effectiveness. Principals, as a result of the "product report," may have a clearer idea of what is practised.

Staff may have a large input in promotion decisions due to the structure of high schools. Generally, teachers are responsible for specific subject areas and, in the course of a program, a student may be exposed to several teachers. Staff involvement could indicate all subject teachers are consulted. Unlike high school students, elementary students tend to have one teacher. This might explain why promotion decisions are discussed more often with the teacher than staff in central/junior high schools.

(4) When questionnaire response was analyzed by group (board, central/junior high or feeder school) certain similarities were evident. Central/junior high and feeder school principal response was

similar on items concerning student study habits and promotion during the year.

Board participants responded similarly to feeder school principals on statements concerning: skipping work of a grade, mastering work of a grade, and being a trouble-maker in class. There were few instances of response similarity among central/junior high and board respondents. Two examples of board respondents disagreeing with both central/junior high and feeder school principals occurred. These examples dealt with student study habits and conditional promotion.

Some questions produced only slight agreement between all three groups. These questions focused on minimum standards of achievement, grade repetition, chronological age, and classroom behaviour. There was no questionnaire item where all three groups responded similarly.

The fact that response of board personnel tended to be more consistent with feeder rather than central/junior high school principals may be explained by referring to a point made in an earlier conclusion. Megapolicies of boards may be designed to allow flexibility at the school level, resulting in general board policies. These policies might allow continuous progress and competency based promotion at the same time. If central/junior high schools tend to have a stronger academic emphasis then the response pattern is explainable. Both feeder schools and boards give greater consideration to factors other than academic achievement causing these groups to be similar. But if central/junior high school principals primarily consider academic achievement, their responses will differ from participants of feeder schools and boards.

Similarity of response between board and feeder school participants may also be influenced by the proportion of feeder schools within a district. There is a greater proportion of feeder schools within each board and board participants may be responding according to the policy of the majority of schools.

There appears to be less grade retention among feeder schools as indicated by their strong response to "no student remains in any grade for more than two years," and "no student spends more than three years completing three grades." The least amount of skipping occurs in central/junior high schools. Chronological age, as a factor in deciding promotion, tends to be considered most frequently in elementary schools. With regard to classroom behaviour as a promotion factor, central/junior high principals tended to consider "being a trouble-maker" while feeder schools considered "inattentiveness." Board officials underestimated the use of both.

Probably more "skipping" occurs in feeder schools because there may be greater differences in ability among elementary students in their beginning years. This may be a result of factors such as rate of physical and mental development or home preparation.

Central/junior high principals may not consider chronological age to the extent that feeder school principals do because of the dropout rate. If feeder schools ignored chronological age, the potential for extreme age differences would exist. In central/junior high schools, the age range would not be as great because most students leave school at the age of 16. Furthermore, age differences in feeder schools would create more difficulties. These difficulties would arise from variation in the physical and social maturity of students.



Feeder school response shows that physical and social maturity are considerations in deciding promotion.

Schools consider classroom behaviour when deciding promotion. Central/junior high schools may consider "being a trouble-maker in class" because discipline problems may arise from such behaviour.

Inattentiveness may be more serious than discipline in elementary feeder schools.

(5) There was considerable disagreement on the issue of conditional promotion. This concept was questioned in two places on the questionnaire. Board response appeared to be contradictory. On the first question (1c), half did not conditionally promote students while one-quarter stated they did not on the second question (3b). There was not as much conditional promotion among feeder schools as in high schools. However, board response is not really contradictory because in responding to the first question, boards may have known only certain schools practice this. For example, this may not be the practice of all schools within the district. In the second instance, boards were asked if they allow conditional promotion.

Conditional promotion may be more viable in central/junior high schools due to the prevalence of subject teaching. Since the elementary school has a more integrated curriculum, students may not be promoted unless they perform well in all areas of a program. An opposing view would suggest less conditional promotion occurs among elementary schools because borderline students may be promoted without having "conditions" attached.

(6) In many cases, there was little similarity in promotion policies of central/junior high schools and their associated feeder schools. Some central/junior high schools tended to correlate

consistently with many of their feeder schools, whether this correlation was high or low. One central high and its feeder schools had a negative correlation, while another had a perfect positive correlation. The mean correlation between schools in each board was relatively low even though some boards had consistently high means.

These results could indicate one of two things. School boards are not coordinating promotion policies in their schools or they have intentionally devised different policies for elementary and secondary schools. Within some boards, promotion policies of central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools do show consistency. One board had a negative correlation because feeder schools were matched with only one central high school. This central high school returned the questionnaire uncompleted. A perfect correlation was obtained for one central/junior high and its feeder school because both schools had the same administration. In view of the fact that some boards have high correlations among schools, one can speculate that many of the remaining boards do not coordinate promotion policies. The result of this is central/junior high schools enroll students from other schools with differing promotion policies.

#### Recommendations

The following are suggested as recommendations arising from the study:

- (1) The Department of Education should assess school board promotion policy differences occurring throughout the province. It should be determined if such differences ought to exist. Methods of better coordination should be developed if these practices ought not to exist.

(2) School boards and schools should further examine student promotion policy discrepancies prevalent within their districts. Upon completion of this exercise, it should be determined if these discrepancies ought to exist. If they ought not to, means of better coordinating student promotion policies should be devised.

(3) Every board and school should state its student promotion policy in written form. This policy should be accompanied by appropriate administrative regulations.

(4) In view of conflicting student promotion policies, boards and schools should assess the merits of differing policies with a view of improving their present student promotion policies.

(5) A study should be undertaken to determine teacher perceptions of their school's promotion policy to determine if this view differs from that of their principal's.

(6) A similar study should be undertaken to examine different grades and streams in the Newfoundland school system.

(7) Further study should be undertaken to assess teacher, parent and student reaction to existing promotion practices with the aim of seeking suggestions for improvement.

(8) A study of other provinces should be conducted so that comparative analyses of student promotion policies can be made.

(9) The relationship between student promotion policies and variables such as: principal's experience and professional preparation, school community and board size and board denomination, should be determined.

(10) A study should be carried out to more accurately determine why student promotion policy differences currently exist in the area

of: conditional promotion; acceleration; skipping; classroom behaviour; chronological age; study mastery level; promotion during the year; and student study habits.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
THE INSTRUMENTS

### Study of Student Promotion Policies in Newfoundland

In answering the following questions focus primarily on GRADES V, VI, VII AND VIII.

1. Indicate by means of a check mark (✓) the extent to which these promotion policies are the PRACTICE OF YOUR BOARD for regular stream students.

POLICY STATEMENT	always a practice	usually a practice	rarely a practice	never a practice
A. Minimum standards of academic achievement are specified for each grade level and students must meet these standards in order to be promoted.	—	—	—	—
B. A student is promoted to the next higher subject level when all academic requirements of the present level are achieved.	—	—	—	—
C. Students whose academic achievement is borderline are conditionally promoted to the next grade.	—	—	—	—
D. Students are not promoted if their marks are below the passing standard in any one of the major subjects (e.g., Math, English, Science).	—	—	—	—
E. No student remains in any grade for more than two years.	—	—	—	—
F. No student spends more than three years completing two consecutive grades.	—	—	—	—
G. No student is permitted to spend less than three years completing three grades.	—	—	—	—
H. Skipping (e.g., omitting the work of a grade) is permitted.	—	—	—	—
I. Chronological age is a factor in determining promotion.	—	—	—	—
J. Students are permitted to get is of their social group through either acceleration or retardation.	—	—	—	—
K. The multi-factor approach to promotion or non-promotion decisions are used (chronological age, social maturity, academic achievement, emotional status, physical maturity, etc.).	—	—	—	—
L. A student is promoted regardless of how low his level of success in academic subjects.	—	—	—	—
M. The student has to be able to demonstrate his level of academic performance in order to be promoted.	—	—	—	—



2. Use a check mark (✓) to indicate the validity of the following reasons for non-promotion of a borderline student in view of your Board's promotion practices.

REASON FOR NON-PROMOTION	always a valid reason	usually a valid reason	rarely a valid reason	never a valid reason
A. He has not mastered the work of the grade.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. He would not be able to handle the work of the next grade.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. He has a poor attitude towards school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. He is physically immature for his age.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. He habitually works far below his grade.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. He has very poor study habits.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. He needs to learn that effort is required for success in school work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. His attendance record has been very poor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. He has frequently been a trouble-maker in class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. He is rather sickly and seems to lack vitality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. His marks are borderline and he needs a firmer foundation before going on to more advanced work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. He is a slow learner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. His marks rank him near to the bottom of his class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. He is frequently inattentive during classroom lessons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. His social maturity is considerably below average for his grade level.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. (a) Does this board have a generally accepted practice or tradition specifying the percentage of students who should be promoted?

Check appropriate response. Yes ( ) No ( )

- (b) Does your board permit "conditional" promotion at the end of June?

Check appropriate response. Yes ( ) No ( )

If your answer is "yes" please explain what is meant by the term "conditional" (e.g., the student who receives a conditional promotion must do satisfactory work at summer school).

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- (c) Does your board permit promotions during the year (other than in June)?

Check appropriate response. Yes ( ) No ( )

If your answer is "yes" please explain (e.g., students in accelerated programs complete the work of four grades in three academic years).

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- (d) By whom is the promotion or non-promotion of individual students discussed (e.g., the staff in a staff meeting)?

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- (e) Who makes the final decision about the promotion or non-promotion of individual students (e.g., classroom teacher, principal)?

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Additional Comments:

Study of Student Promotion Policies in Newfoundland

In answering the following questions; if you are an ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL focus primarily on GRADES V AND VI. If you are a CENTRAL/JUNIOR HIGH PRINCIPAL focus primarily on GRADES VII AND VIII.

1. Indicate by means of a check mark (✓) the extent to which these promotion policies are the PRACTICE OF YOUR SCHOOL for regular stream students.

POLICY STATEMENT	always a practice	usually a practice	rarely a practice	never a practice
A. Minimum standards of academic achievement are specified for each grade level and students must meet these standards in order to be promoted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. A student is promoted to the next higher subject level when all academic requirements of the present level are achieved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Students whose academic achievement is borderline are conditionally promoted to the next grade.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Students are not promoted if their marks are below the passing standard in any one of the major subjects (e.g., Math, English, Science).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. No student remains in any grade for more than two years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. No student spends more than three years completing two consecutive grades.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. No student is permitted to spend less than three years completing three grades.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Skipping (e.g., omitting the work of a grade) is permitted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Chronological age is a factor in determining promotion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Students are permitted to get out of their social group through either acceleration or retardation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. The multi-factor approach to promotion or non-promotion decisions is used (chronological age, social maturity, academic achievement, emotional status, physical maturity, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. A student is promoted regardless of how low his level of success in academic subjects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. The student has to be able to demonstrate his level of academic performance in order to be promoted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Use a check mark (✓) to indicate the validity of the following reasons for non-promotion of a borderline student in view of your school's promotion practices.

REASON FOR NON-PROMOTION	always a valid reason	usually a valid reason	rarely a valid reason	never a valid reason
A. He has not mastered the work of the grade.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. He would not be able to handle the work of the next grade.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. He has a poor attitude towards school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. He is physically immature for his age.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. He habitually works far below his grade.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. He has very poor study habits.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. He needs to learn that effort is required for success in school work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. His attendance record has been very poor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. He has frequently been a trouble-maker in class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. He is rather sickly and seems to lack vitality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. His marks are borderline and he needs a firmer foundation before going on to more advanced work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. He is a slow learner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. His marks rank him near to the bottom of his class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. He is frequently inattentive during classroom lessons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. His social maturity is considered below average for his grade level.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. (a) Does your school have a generally accepted practice or tradition specifying the percentage of students who should be promoted?

Check appropriate response. Yes ( ) No ( )

- (b) Does your school permit "conditional" promotion at the end of June?

Check appropriate response. Yes ( ) No ( )

If your answer is "yes" please explain what is meant by the term "conditional" (e.g., the student who receives a conditional promotion must do satisfactory work at summer school).

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- (c) Does your school permit promotion during the year (other than in June)?

Check appropriate response. Yes ( ) No ( )

If your answer is "yes" please explain (e.g., students in accelerated programs complete the work of four grades in three academic years).

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- (d) By whom is the promotion or non-promotion of individual students discussed (e.g., the staff in a staff meeting)?

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- (e) Who makes the final decision about the promotion or non-promotion of individual students (e.g., classroom teacher, principal)?

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Additional Comments:

APPENDIX B  
CORRESPONDENCE





MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND  
St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada A1B 3X8

Department of Educational Administration

Telex: 016-1101  
Telephone: (709) 753-1200

April 18, 1980

Dear Sir,

We are writing to you at this time to request your permission to allow Mr. Cyril Coombs, a graduate student in Educational Administration at Memorial University, access to your district so that he might carry out research for a study he is conducting on student promotion practices in Newfoundland central/junior high schools, and associated feeder schools. This study will examine student promotion practices at two levels - school board and school. Central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools have been selected for study so that student exposure to different promotion practices, as they enroll in different schools, can be examined.

Participants in this study will include district superintendents and principals of central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools. If your school district does not have central/junior high schools, no principals will be included from your district. However, as a district superintendent, we request that you complete the questionnaire and return it to us as soon as possible.

Two important facts must be emphasized here - 1) the intent of this study is to determine existing student promotion practices. No attempt will be made to evaluate existing practices either within or between school districts, and 2) each questionnaire bears a code number. This is necessary for any follow-up regarding questionnaire returns, and to match central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools with their respective boards. No individual participant or school name will ever be identified in the body of this study.

To assist in distributing the questionnaire to all participants, we have enclosed a list of all central/junior high schools located in your district. Could you please fill in the name(s) of the respective elementary feeder schools for each central/junior high school tested? This appears to be the only avenue available to acquire this particular information.

It is extremely important that you respond to this letter and return the completed questionnaire as soon as possible. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided for this purpose. If you should require any additional information, please contact me at: 753-1200 (ext. 3221) or 753-5983.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Cyril P. Coombs  
Researcher

CHRIS M. LEBLANC, Ph.D.  
Project Supervisor

Enclosures



MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada A1B 3X8

Department of Educational Administration

Telex: 016-4101

Telephone: (709) 753-1200

April 28, 1980

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing you at this time to request your assistance in helping Mr. Cyril Coombs, a graduate student in Educational Administration, carry out research for a study he is conducting on student promotion in Newfoundland central/junior high schools, and associated feeder schools. This study will examine student promotion practices at two levels - school board and school. Central/junior high school and associated feeder schools have been selected for study so that student exposure to different promotion practices, as they enroll in different schools, can be examined.

Participants in this study will include district superintendents and principals of central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools. Your superintendent has already granted Mr. Coombs permission to include your board in the study. As a principal of a central/junior high school or associated feeder school, we request that you complete the questionnaire and return it to us as soon as possible.

Two important facts must be emphasized here - 1) the intent of this study is to determine existing student promotion practices. No attempt will be made to evaluate existing practices either within or between school districts, and 2) each questionnaire bears a code number. This is necessary for any follow-up regarding questionnaire returns, and to match central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools with their respective boards. No individual participant or school name will ever be identified in the body of this study.

It is extremely important that you respond to this letter and return the completed questionnaire as soon as possible. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided for this purpose. If you should require any additional information, please contact me at: 753-1200 (ext. 3221) or 753-5983.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Cyril P. Coombs  
Researcher

Dennis L. Trehan, Ph.D.  
Project Advisor

Enclosures



MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND  
St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada A1B 3X8

Department of Educational Administration

Telex: 016-4101  
Telephone: (709) 753-1200

May 30, 1980

Dear Sir/Madam,

A few weeks ago Mr. Cyril Coombs, a graduate student in Educational Administration forwarded you a questionnaire dealing with promotion practices of Newfoundland central/junior high schools and associated feeder schools. In the event you have not already completed this questionnaire, would you please take a few minutes of your busy schedule to complete and return it as soon as possible? Not only are the results of your questionnaire important to this study, but a comparative analysis of several other schools cannot be made until yours is returned. If you have returned the questionnaire, please accept our sincere thanks. Please be assured that no individual participant or school will ever be identified in the body of this study.

If you have misplaced or not received the questionnaire, would you please advise us so that we might forward you another.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Cyril P. Coombs  
Researcher

Dennis L. Treslan, Ph.D.  
Project Supervisor



